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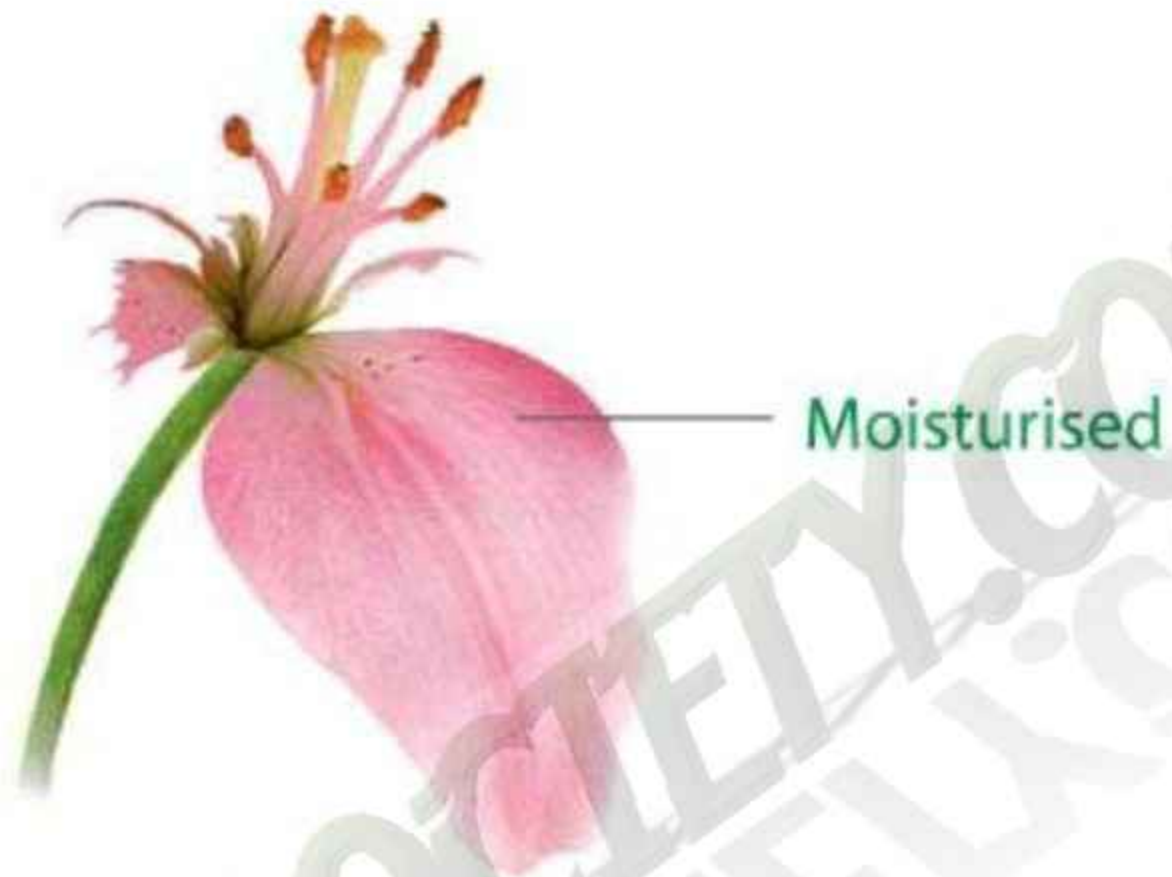
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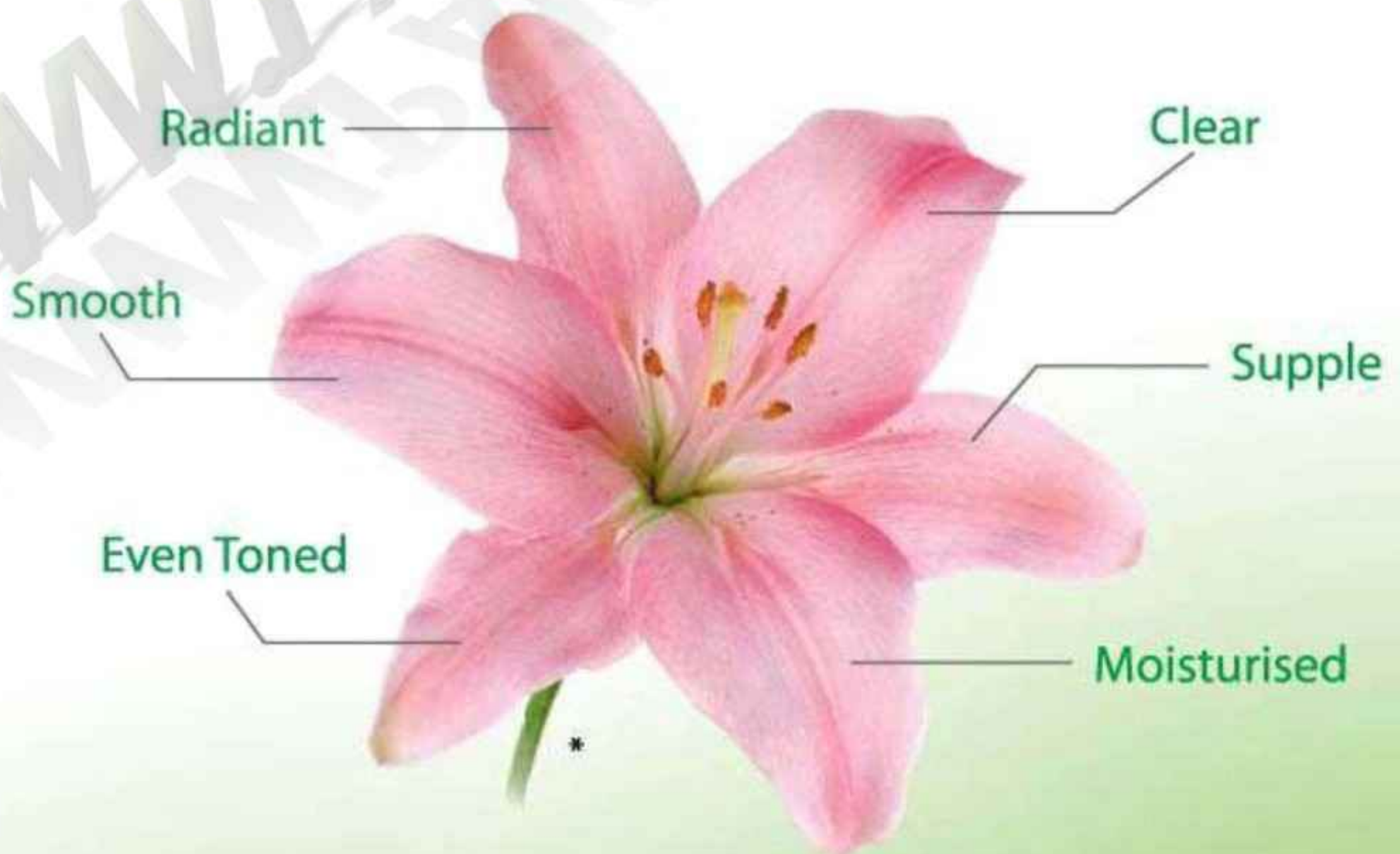
* Creative visualization of 6 Pro Care benefits

From the Editor

Heart Matters

I've observed that whatever evolves in the West eventually happens here, even if it takes a few decades—as India develops—and it's not always for the better. Heart disease, long considered a man's problem, became the No.1 killer of women in the US some time ago, especially after women entered the workforce in large numbers and faced the same stresses as men did. Finally, that's the case here as well. Our cover story advises on how women should guard against heart disease by being made aware of the symptoms unique to them.

This issue is dedicated to matters of the heart in more ways than one. Judging from the letters we receive, many of you love our annual Valentine's Day stories. But several don't—they say reading about how somebody met, courted and got married trivializes a magazine that usually has articles about great personalities, the environment or medical research. I decided to take both viewpoints into consideration. The common thread that knits the four couples in this year's V-Day selection is not just romantic love, but courage and an extraordinarily deep commitment in the face of unusual circumstances—and it didn't even matter where these stories came from. This safeguards Digest values as well as maintains our international character. We also have a Quick Study on Valentine's Day (page 78) as well as an invaluable piece on how a certain amount of conflict can actually strengthen a marriage (page 134).

I belong to the generation that listened to The Beatles in school, when your musical tastes begin to form. In fact, a few years ago I was delighted to pick up, at a Mumbai flea market, a rare 1964 Beatles single, a small record (which plays at 45 rpm, and yes, I still use a hi-fi turntable) with a song on either side from the film "A Hard Day's Night." I'm equally delighted to bring you a story on Paul McCartney in our Book Bonus this month.

Mohan Sivanand

editor.india@rd.com

Reader's Digest

LIFE WELL SHARED

FEBRUARY 2012

FEATURES

(COVER) ILLUSTRATED BY SAMEER KULAVOOR; ILLUSTRATED BY SHOUT

*On the cover

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Leisurely plunges.

48
Need a college degree? Think again.

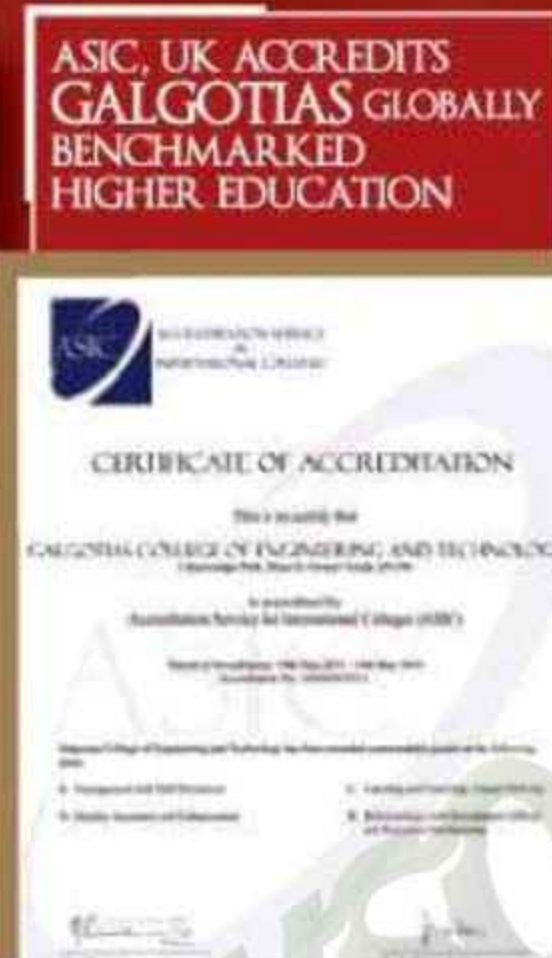
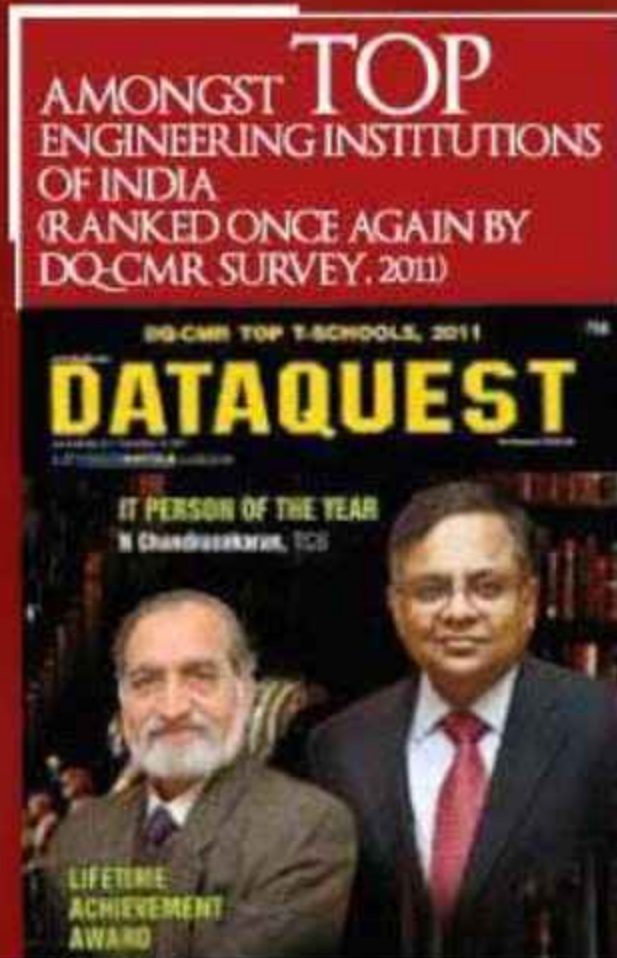
166
Conjugal secrets.

DEPARTMENTS

RD LIVING

(MAN) ILLUSTRATED BY JASON FORD/HEART; (WOMAN) ILLUSTRATED BY EDDIE GUY

GALGOTIAS WINS TOP RANKINGS & ACCREDITATIONS AMONG INDIA'S FINEST ENGINEERING INSTITUTIONS

BY LEADING NATIONAL MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC ORGANISATIONS

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GU

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Newer than your newborn's skin is the skin on her umbilical cord.

JOHNSON'S® BABY TOP-TO-TOE WASH. USED AND TRUSTED BY LEADING

NO MORE TEARS®

A unique formula that does not sting your baby's eyes and assures doctors and mothers that our products have been specifically formulated and rigorously tested to be safe and gentle for baby eyes.

HYPOALLERGENIC

Clinically proven to be mild and dermatologist-tested. JOHNSON'S® Baby top-to-toe wash can be safely used on babies with sensitive skin too.

pH BALANCE

It's designed to suit the pH of your newborn's skin.

So how will you heal it without hurting your little one?

When you have a cut on your finger, have you noticed how soap stings it? Sometimes even plain water stings it? Now, imagine what your newborn feels when her navel area is being cleaned? Can you risk irritation? Infections? Or anything else that interferes with her body's natural healing process?

Caring for a newborn infant's navel is certainly no child's play. The remnant of the umbilical cord usually dries up and falls off with no problem. But in some cases, the navel area can become infected. When this happens there may be a discharge of pus from the belly button area as well as an offensive odour. It is best to contact your paedia- trician if this occurs since an antibiotic may be necessary. But there are also a few things you can do to properly care for the navel area at home. Including, bathing your baby with something that is used and trusted by leading hospitals worldwide.

JOHNSON'S® Baby top-to-toe wash is used and trusted by leading hospitals worldwide.

That's why, we made a wash that can take special care of your newborn's navel area without stinging her fragile, delicate skin. In other words, we've taken gentleness, love, protection and bottled them. JOHNSON'S® Baby top-to-toe wash is an ultra-mild cleanser for your baby's skin and hair that's gentle enough for newborns and has a pH balance that suits your newborn's skin well.

JOHNSON'S® Baby top-to-toe wash is as mild as water and has been specially formulated to suit newborn skin. JOHNSON'S® Baby top-to-toe wash is so gentle that it can be used for your baby's first bath itself.

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MILDER THAN ANY SOAP

JOHNSON'S® Baby top-to-toe wash is soap-free and dye-free. Its soap-free formula gently cleans your newborn's skin without removing the essential moisture.

VOL 53 NO 2. February 2012

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Quotes

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.

The Buddha

ILLUSTRATED BY VIKI

Lust is what makes you keep wanting to do it, even when you have no desire to be with each other. Love is what makes you keep wanting to be with each other, even when you have no desire to do it.

Judith Viorst

I love solitude, but I prize it most when company is available. *Saul Bellow*

The truth needs so little rehearsal.

Barbara Kingsolver

If you can't change your fate, change your attitude. *Amy Tan*

You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them.

Desmond Tutu, God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time

If you make every game a life-and-death proposition, you're going to have problems. For one thing, you'll be dead a lot.

Dean Smith

Three words strike fear into the hearts of men: Pop the question.

Roxanne Hawn in *The Denver Post*

The most beautiful makeup for a woman is passion. But cosmetics are easier to buy. *Yves St Laurent* in *Women's Wear Daily*

If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. *George Harrison*

To the uneducated, an A is just three sticks. *A.A. Milne*

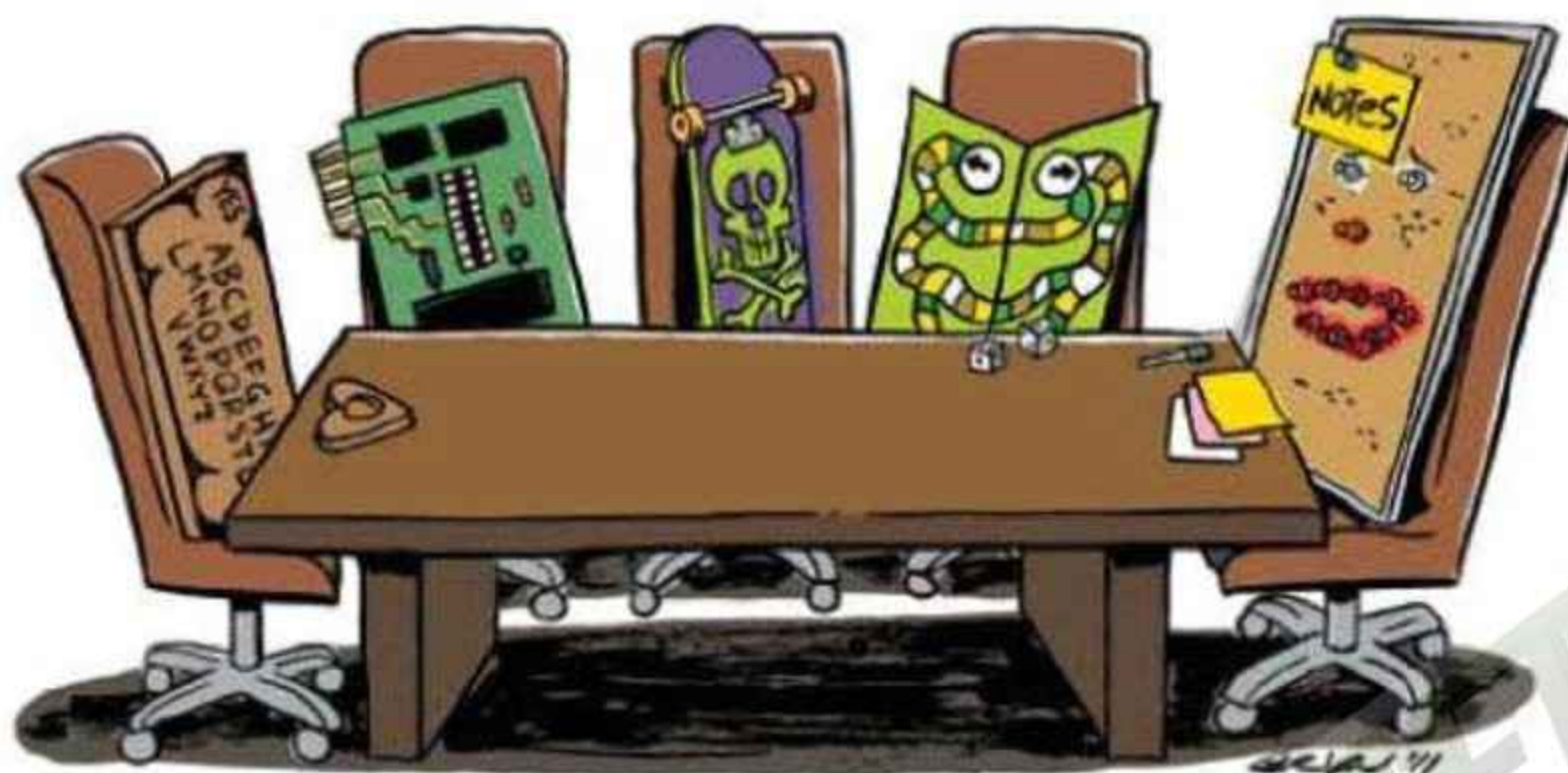
A mind troubled by doubt cannot focus on the course to victory.

Arthur Golden, Memoirs of a Geisha (Knopf)

He who limps is still walking.

Stanislaw Lec

@Work

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

"Why do I always have to be the one who takes notes at board meetings?"

My sister, a teacher, was correcting science papers that had a question on the uses of X-rays. One little girl's answer included the line "to teach maths." Intrigued, my sister asked the girl about it and learnt that her maths teacher had cut old X-ray films into triangles and polygons to teach geometric shapes to the class. *S. Vajreswari,* Chennai

Many years ago I worked at a hospital in West Africa where medical supplies were limited. One day I was trying to straighten the dislocated shoulder of a young man, using very little anesthetic. I was having a difficult time and finally I said, "You know, I just delivered a baby without any anesthetic and here you are, not cooperating."

"Doctor," the man replied, "you just try putting the baby back into that woman." *Sondekere Anand*

A letter I received while presiding over traffic court: "Dear Judge, I am sorry to be so slow in sending in the money for my traffic ticket. But having got recently married, I am just getting back on my feet." *James R. Walton*

My two sons, Jack, eight, and Luke, ten, came to visit me one day at the office. I had a few loose ends to tie up, so I put them in our boardroom, gave them pencils and paper and asked them to entertain themselves.

A short while later, Jack came to see me and said, "Dad, I can see why you call it the 'bored room.' I've been in there only ten minutes and I'm bored already." *Doug Bristow*

The insurance industry loves its acronyms. The first time I saw the term proof of ownership was in a client's file that read: "Insured has POO on damaged items." *Amanda Schaefer*

ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN MCLACHLAN

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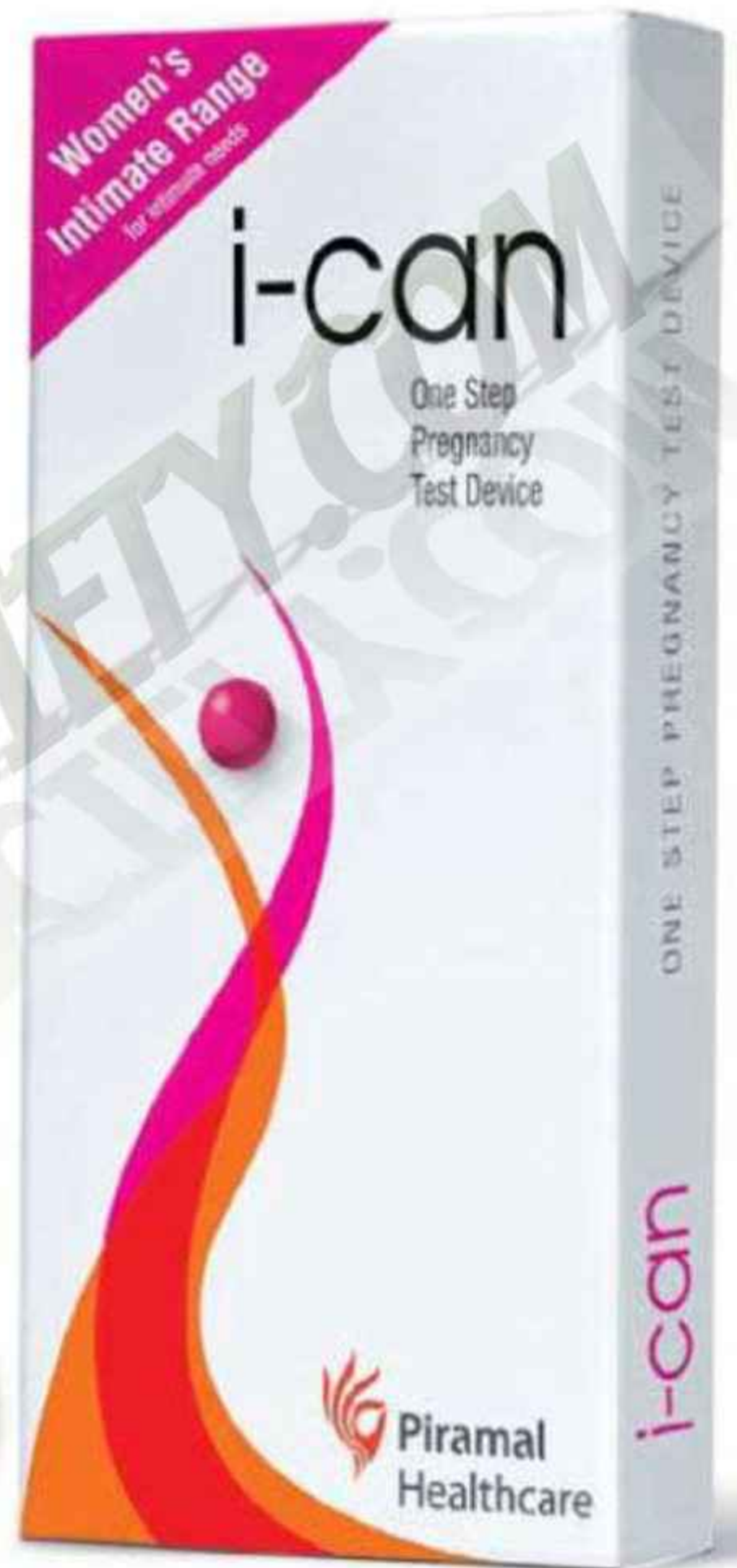

Available at all leading chemist outlets

Dilshad Pastakia, celebrity hair stylist and hair consultant for Keratinology caught up with models Shruti and Sonali, to explain how the Keratinology range can be used to prolong their salon beauty.

SONALI – FASHION MODEL
Constant exposure to lights made Sonali's salon colour fade away too quickly. For her, Dilshad advised the Keratinology Colour Therapy Shampoo and Express Treatment# Conditioner to help her keep her luminous hair colour for longer.

SHRUTI – FASHION MODEL
Shruti's hair had become dry due to constant heat styling. Dilshad recommended the Keratinology Heat Protector Spray to her. Its UV filter protects every millimetre of your hair from heat damage.

The Keratinology range seems to have an answer to everything. "Yes, it does!" Dilshad Pastakia confirms. So what are you waiting for? Grab the new Keratinology by Sunsilk range today!

Join us on facebook.com/sunsilkhairexperts and get your daily hair tips from Keratinology hair consultant Dilshad Pastakia.

Crucial Findings

The news of May Griffith's work [Medical Breakthroughs 2011, December] on the creation of an artificial cornea is exciting. For conventional corneal replacements, however, merely taking a pledge to donate corneas is not enough. A family member of the deceased must inform the nearest eye bank as soon as possible, after death occurs, to retrieve corneas in time.

Dr Narendra Kumar, New Delhi

When I studied about the reovirus in my second year MBBS, I didn't pay much attention, as it was not associated with any illness. After reading about its role in fighting cancer, I re-read and realized that each and every agent in and around the human body has medical importance. It's up to us to find the relationships.

Parmar Nisarg, via e-mail

Peerless Polyglot

Indian children are given little freedom to learn at their will. Many parents want children to become doctors or engineers [Man of Many Words, December]. It was fortunate that Ioannis Ikonomou's parents nurtured his dream and made him a uniquely conscientious translator.

Rishi Raj, Bokaro Steel City, Jharkhand

Follow the talented Ikonomou's method, learn a few languages and pave the way for better understanding and tolerance of other regional languages and cultures in India.

Dharini Premkumar, New Panvel, Mah.

Deadly Gadget

Hearing the sound [Cellphones: Unsafe for Pedestrians! RDHealth, December] of vehicles is as important as watching out for them. Recently a Bangalore college kid, who was on the phone, was run over by a train.

H.R. Seetharam, Bangalore

Polio Endgame

I registered at *www.endofpolio.com* to support the cause [Quick Study, Polio, December] and was surprised to see a lot of Indians already

FOR YEARS, HAVING DIABETES MEANT THE END OF THE ROAD FOR MOST. NOT ANYMORE.

The damage that diabetes does to your body pales in comparison to the damage it can inflict on your mind. Over the last few years India has earned the dubious distinction of being known as the diabetes capital of the world. A sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activity, obesity, stress and consumption of diets rich in fat, sugar and calories are what has led to this high incidence of diabetes among Indians. While modern medication can control diabetes, it cannot make up for the loss of balanced nutrition. Thanks to the revolutionary dietary supplement D-PROTIN, from British Biologicals, diabetics can now be happy and feel normal. A unique formulation that provides the ideal balance of nutrition and taste, it also helps in controlling the complications of diabetes in the long run. So even though certain foods are still restricted, the weakness and fatigue that accompanies this loss of nutrition is totally absent.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR FOR PRESCRIPTION OF D-PROTIN

If you have difficulty locating a doctor/diabetologist near you, call the toll free number **1800-425-37373**

D-PROTIN is available in all the leading pharmacies and medical shops all over india on a doctor's prescription.

This message is brought to you by British Biologicals, a Global Nutraceutical Company in India with over two decades of research in medical nutrition.
For more information log onto www.britishbiologicals.com

registered there. With the availability of social networking sites, the message is going to spread far and wide. For me, who'd thought polio had long been eradicated, the article was an eye-opener. *Radhika Gupta*, Jalandhar

Awry Accusation

Irfana Qadri, by getting her story [Amma's Booty, December] published, has shown the importance she gives to her cook's emotions. Let's all be doubly sure before making any allegation. *Mallika S.*, Thane, Mah.

Scams, scandals and rampant corruption that have become commonplace made me skeptical of the inherent goodness of mankind. But the cook's story and a similar personal incident are eloquent assertions that such goodness survives. *Y. Kameswari*, Hyderabad

Be it an outsider, your staff, your family member or your children, such allegations can be humiliating and tear a hard-working person's life apart. Lack of patience sours relationships. *Shashi Yadav*, Dinjan, Assam

Alternative Medicine

My father met with an accident and broke his ribs [Fringe Benefits, December]. A piece of bone pierced a lung and caused internal bleeding. It took more than three hours to get medical attention. Doctors later said that his survival was a miracle. Father used to do yoga and pranayama regularly, which helped his lungs retain oxygen longer and thereby survive the accident.

Laxmi Sivakumar, on RD Facebook

Sheer Luck

I am your avid reader for over five decades [From the Editor, December]. Every time I receive your bulky Sweepstakes mail, I ignore it. I do not believe in luck and there's the fear that my rather contented life would be thrown out of gear if I won the first prize. *C.P. Srinivasan*, Chennai

Mr Srinivasan gets this month's Best Letter prize.

It will be nice if you tell your publisher friends that I am interested only in the quality of the magazine and not in the prizes offered.

P.G. Nair, Thrissur, Kerala

Your December editorial disturbs me, an old Reader's Digest addict. I do not expect the editor to defend what the marketing people are indulging in. We put Reader's Digest and its editor on a high pedestal. *R.S. Pillai*, Kollam, Kerala

I was skeptical about the Sweepstakes till you demystified them. Now I can wholeheartedly try my luck. *Anand Krishnan*, Chennai

Splendid Lagoons

"Jewel in God's Own Crown" [December] took me back home to my beautiful little village in Kerala thousands of kilometres away from

this desert city. Even though the state here pours millions to make the surroundings greener, I miss the beauty of nature's own creation.

Ramachandran Nair, Muscat, Oman

Visakham Thirunal, who ruled Travancore between 1880 and 1885, popularized tapioca cultivation, especially because of recurrent crop failure. One area close to his palace in Trivandrum was, till the end of the 1950s, known as *maracheeni vila* [tapioca garden]. It was the spot he'd selected for tapioca cultivation. Today, the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute is also located in the city.

C. Divakaran, Trivandrum

Stung!

Please edit statements like, "Someone once said of him, if you haven't heard of Sting, you haven't been on this planet for the last 40 years" [Sting, December]. I have not heard of him and there may be millions of others who haven't. That doesn't mean we have not lived on this planet for the last 40 years.

C. Radhika, Secunderabad

Yes, you can't say that without such a risk, but even if we had edited that out, someone did use that metaphor! —Eds.

Outrageously Blaring

Unnecessary honking is an issue [Outrageous! December] that most of us overlook. But a little consideration from everyone can reduce this burden on our ears.

Syed Faraz Abbas, Agra

Many of us think it's our birthright to violate traffic rules. Those affected by such violations honk—and trouble multiplies.

K. Venkata Ramana Rao, via e-mail

I witnessed how mindless honking cost a life in Kolkata: a motorist blew his shrill horn so close to a pedestrian that he got a heart attack.

Ganti Mahapatruni Rama Rao, Visakhapatnam

Selfless Souls

One common thread connects all those remarkable individuals in your Asian of the Year [December] stories. They have a deep sense of affection and caring for others, and can bring about lasting change.

M. Vijay, Sholinghur, TN

Why This...?

Your prize for the author of the best letter, the Reader's Digest book *How to Write and Speak Better,* made me wonder why any best letter writer would need it.

Bhushan Chander Jindal, Jalandhar

The author of the best letter, chosen by the editors, will receive a prize: The Reader's Digest book ***How to Write and Speak Better*** priced at ₹1099.

Post opinions to the Editorial address, or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com (no attachments please). Include your phone number and address. Letters will be condensed and edited for clarity.

Right Here Right Now

THE WHO / THE HOW / THE NOW

Artefacts of the heart found in the Museum of Broken Relationships.

The Stuff of Memories

How former paramours toast time gone by

When Dražen Grubišić and Olinka Vištica ended their relationship in 2006, they joked about creating a museum in their city, Zagreb, Croatia, to display the remnants of their time together—items like a small white windup rabbit that each of them carried on solo trips. Three years later, the former couple put the toy bunny in a local art festival, alongside dozens of other similar items from their friends. The show attracted hundreds of fans, prompting the twosome to open the Museum of Broken Relationships.

As a travelling exhibition, the show has touched down in more than 15 countries as well as four US cities and amassed over 800 anonymously donated items (to donate, visit *brokenships.com*). A plaque with each piece lists the duration and location of the relationship behind it—and sometimes even more. "The objects are triggers of memories," says Vištica. "We try to create an emotional roller coaster" for the audience. In other words, hold on to your hats, just in case the show rolls into your neck of the lonesome woods. *Beth Dreher*

ON TREN

DR DONNA STOLZ

Right Here Right Now

POINTLESS... BUT WE LOVE IT

These "iMeshi" smartphone covers from Japanese brand Strapya World aren't something anyone needs, but they're oh so covetable in a goofy, *say what!?* way.

PICTURE MEDIA

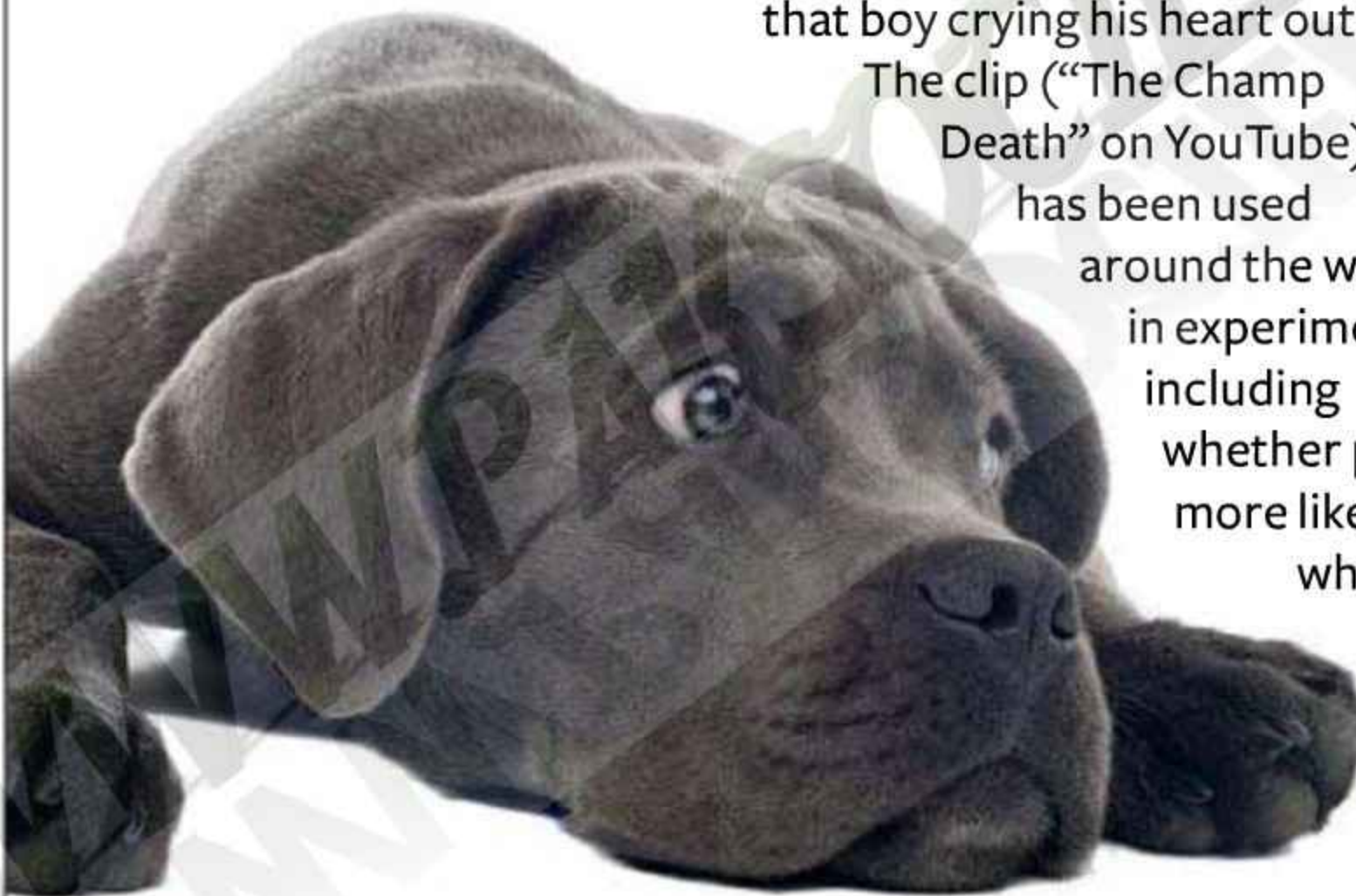
Right Here Right Now

UNIVERSITY TESTS PROVE...

No. 1 tear-jerkers

What's guaranteed to make you cry—harsh words from a friend? A sick puppy? Your credit card bill? Well, unless you're highly unusual, a clip of just under three minutes from the 1979 film *The Champ* should do it. After extensive testing, US psychologists Robert Levenson and James Gross found that the scene in which nine-year-old Ricky Schroder reacts to the death of his onscreen father (Jon Voight) is more likely to make test subjects feel sad than any other—even the demise of Bambi's mother. More than a decade after starting the research, Gross, now a professor at Stanford University, says, "I still feel sad when I see that boy crying his heart out."

The clip ("The Champ Death" on YouTube) has been used around the world in experiments, including whether people are more likely to spend money when sad (they are) and whether depressed people are more likely to cry (they aren't).

Enough to make you weep: at age nine, Schroder's tears won him a Golden Globe.

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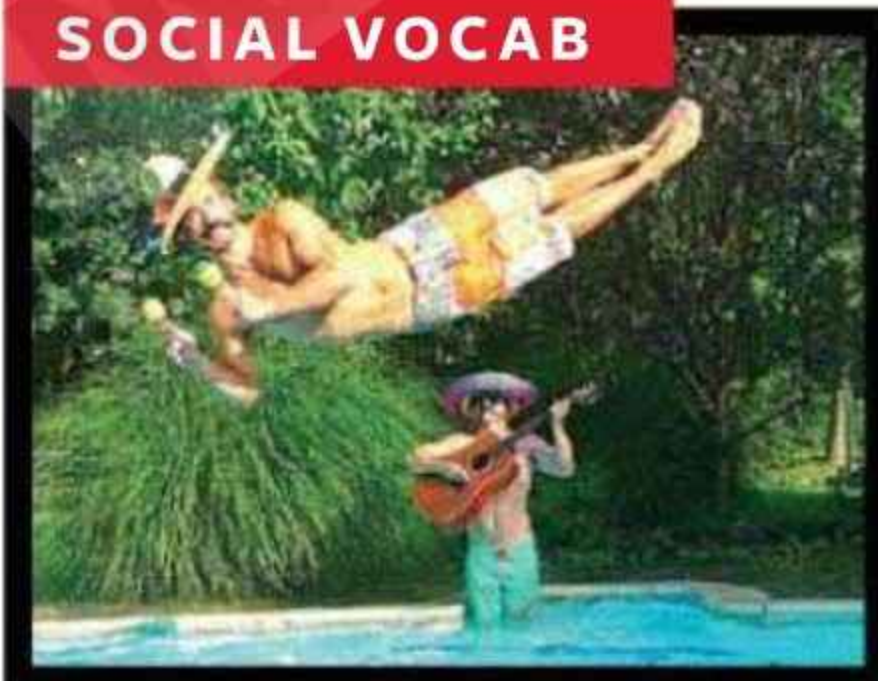
Leisure dive

The new "planking," this consists of being snapped in mid-air above a body of water in a relaxed pose. Props help: sombreros, drinks, books or even pillows. The aim? To get your shot posted on *LeisureDive.com*

THINKSTOCK

Dalmia Continental

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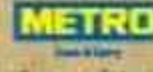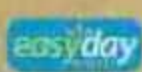
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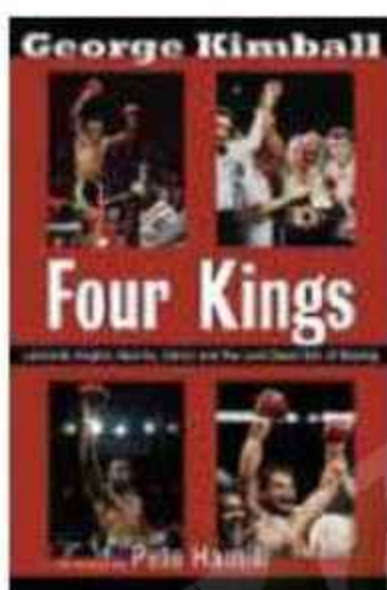
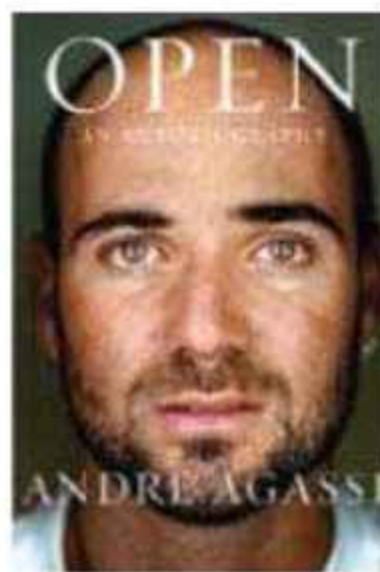
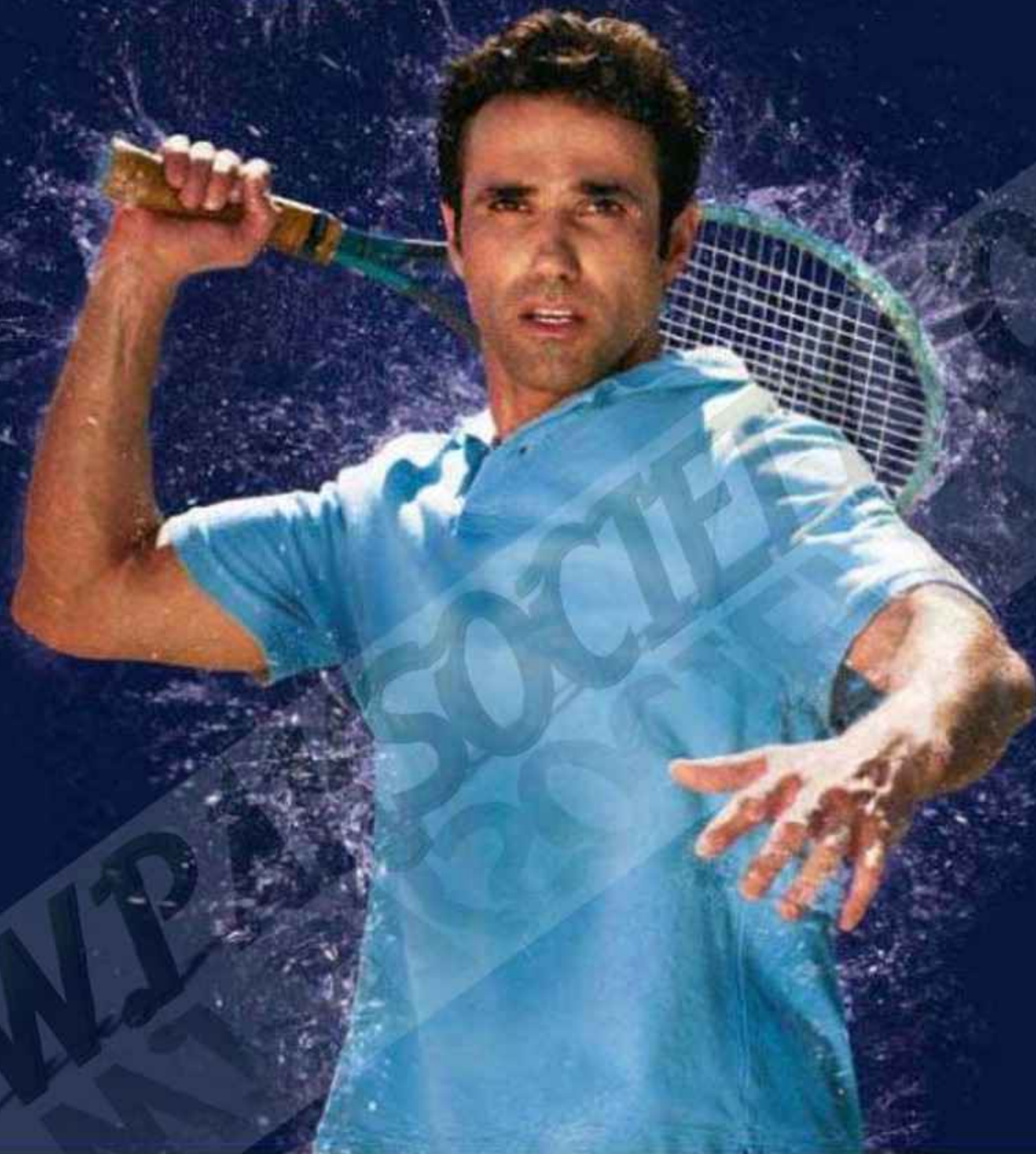
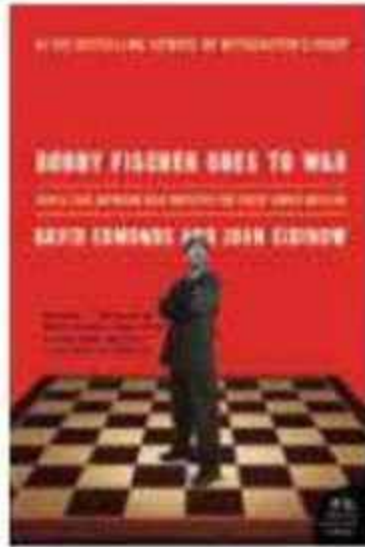
The Sporting Life

What attracts me to sport, above all, is its theatricality and drama. Its participants are modern-day gladiators, vying for supremacy. This is particularly true of boxing.

FOUR KINGS by George Kimball is the story of a quartet of legendary fighters in the 1980s. Kimball, the renowned American sportswriter, was the ultimate boxing insider, covering nearly 400 world title fights in his distinguished career.

Kimball's triumph lies in that he doesn't analyze the fighter technically, but instead fleshes out their personalities, none more poignantly than Roberto Durán, the Panamanian who grew up in utter poverty and had to make ends meet by dancing on the streets to feed his family. Kimball leads the reader beyond just the bright lights of the boxing ring, introducing us to the fighter's hometowns, families, trainers, managers, and even hangers-on. He belongs to no camp, takes no sides and is thus able to build a rapport with all four fighters equally, conversing with them before and after their greatest fights. This book, chronicling the last golden age of boxing, is for fanatics and neophytes alike.

OPEN: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Andre Agassi is a startlingly honest memoir of the tennis legend. What struck me most was the terrible loneliness of a tennis player's life. Agassi likens tennis to boxing, but says that instead of landing blows on the opponent, the battle rages within. He recounts his on-court rivalries and historic tennis matches vividly and gives wonderful insights into the strengths and weaknesses of his rivals and idols, sometimes with hilarious results. Jimmy Connors is likened to Caesar, for his pompous attitude. A young Greek kid named Sampras is dismissed as no threat at all. The best action takes place outside the spotlight. A young Agassi, confused and angry, tries to hide himself through his outrageous fashion statements, taking to wearing a hairpiece at the final of the French Open. He builds a 'surrogate family' to compensate for the childhood he never had, being shipped off to a tennis academy at a young age by his domineering 'tennis dad'.

Himself a school dropout, Agassi builds a school for underprivileged children to give them the gift of education. He, nevertheless, remains at a loss to explain some of his contradictions. Perhaps it's best left that way, for it only adds to his enigma.

In 1972, the world

watched a young US chess player battle Boris Spassky, a Soviet grandmaster in the hopes of becoming World Champion. The event was portrayed, rather simplistically, as a clash of good and evil, of capitalism versus Communism, and American exceptionalism against the Russian machine. All that was hype.

Fischer was no hero. His reputation for being notoriously difficult was well-earned, dictating everything from the number of people allowed to attend his matches to the lighting and the extravagant size of his appearance fees. Spassky learnt chess in the Ural mountains of East Moscow after his family fled Hitler's forces. For Spassky, chess was the only way out of poverty, to respectability and recognition at least, if not riches. They were two very different people with just one thing in common: a deep love of chess.

In **BOBBY FISCHER GOES TO WAR**, David Edmonds and John Eidinow not only retell the story of that most famous chess match of all time, they also examine its participants, the controversies and the events that surrounded it. The authors talk to mentors, grandmasters, families and officials, vividly tracing the childhoods of both men, and investigating their personalities, finding out what moulded these two men into great champions.

Edmonds and Eidinow painstakingly recreate the tensions on the Soviet side as well. They narrate how the KGB routinely harassed Russian grandmasters, as a penalty for defeat. The authors, wisely, shy away from analyzing the games and take a broader view, thereby telling a much richer and more fulfilling story.

If you've ever wondered what goes on in the mind of a cricket legend in the heat of battle, take a journey through the made-up thoughts of the world's greatest cricketers in **CRICKILEAKS: THE SECRET ASHES DIARIES.** On his website, Alan Tyers, a humour writer for *The Daily Telegraph* and *Cricinfo.com,* describes his writing as being direct in thought, clear in language and deficient in research. I'd add only another word to that: Hilarious. Among the 40 cricketing journals in *Crickileaks* are some absolute gems. The diary of England Captain Douglas Jardine magnificently captures his antipathy towards all things on his voyage to Australia. Ricky Ponting memorably recalls being bounced out by a little girl at the nets and arguing with the umpire. And Mike Brearley plays therapist to a troubled young Aussie named Jeff (Thompson). With every page, Tyers manages to capture the unique distinct personalities of all his subjects, which lets you immerse yourself in the fun. *Crickileaks* is a good read to lighten the mood and brighten up your day.

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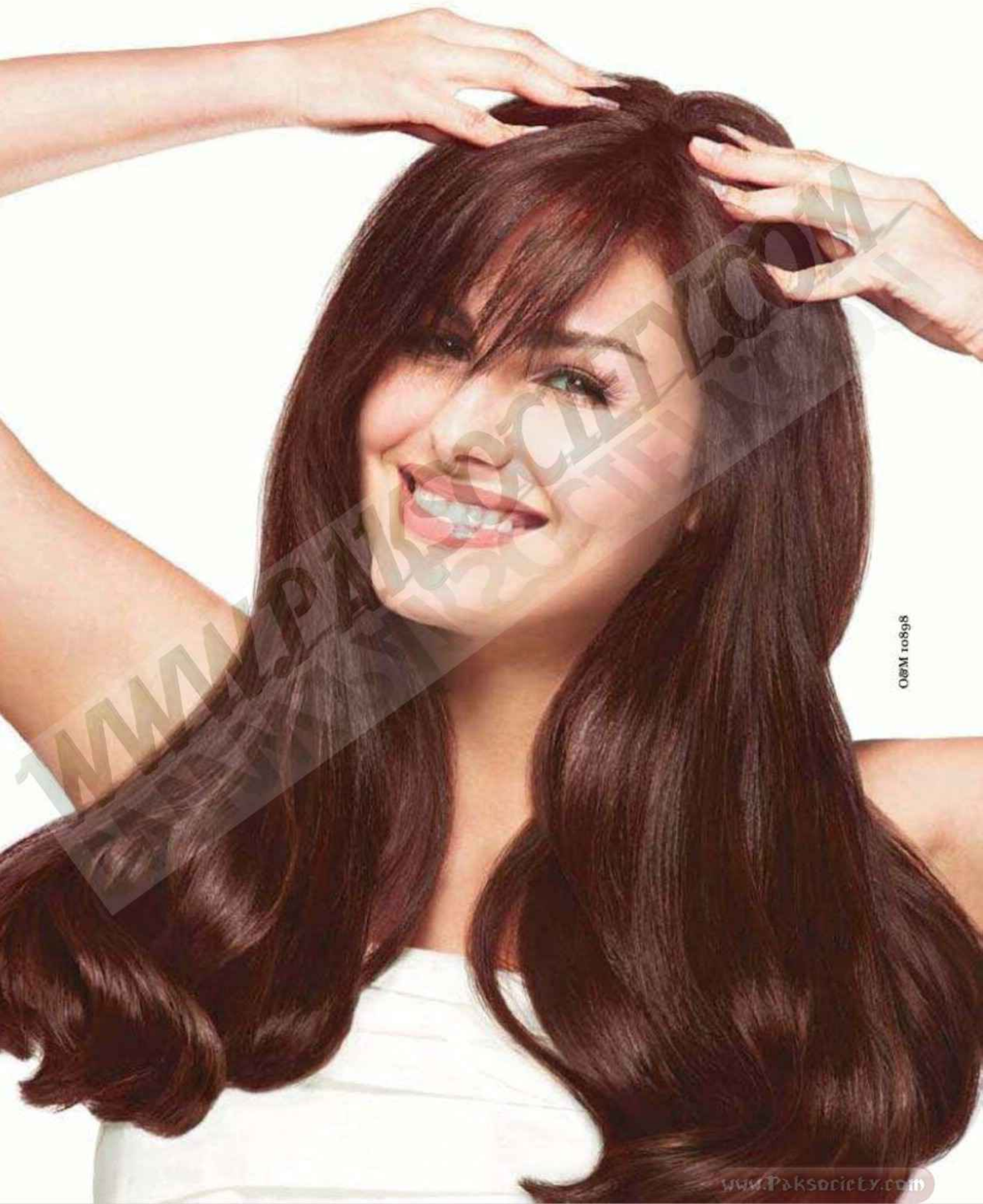
*Refers to non-conditioning shampoo.

I just transferred *to a new department. Having worked in the same job at the same company for 24 years, I found the change exciting. The only problem is that the person I work with doesn't want me there and hoards the work. I'm left cleaning files. The supervisor is excited to have me there but has no idea how the other person feels. What do I do?* Sick of Filing

Dear Filing,
This is management's problem, not yours. Ask your supervisor to give you specific assignments, and let him or her know if your coworker is interfering. If you still have nothing to do but clean files, clean them better than anyone in history, and watch your responsibilities soar.

At what point *does "helper" cross the line to slave? My wife broke her arm, and I do everything she needs two hands to do—but does this mean I have to jump up every five minutes to get her a glass of water, carry small things, or turn off lights?* Men's Libber

Dear Libber,
Oh, relax. She needs attention and some fussing over. How long can her arm be in that cast? Six weeks? Make this a game. Say "Honey, I'm gonna wait on your every need now, but the minute that cast comes off, we're going out to celebrate my emancipation!"

Jeanne Marie Laskas is not a shrink, but she does have uncommon sense.

At school, *I always seem to get paired with the "difficult" person. On my tennis team, I'm matched up with one poor backhand no one else wants because he's short-tempered and bossy and would rather lose a point than take advice. In class, I get saddled with the kid who doesn't care. I'm sick of putting up with people everyone else shuns. How can I avoid this without rudely asking for a different partner every time?*
Unwilling Accomplice

Dear Unwilling,
First, take a good, hard look in the mirror. Is it possible that you, too, are one of the "difficult" ones and that's

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why people lump you with them? No? Are you sure? Okay, then: Be glad. Realize that others see you as accommodating and interpersonally skilled. It's a compliment! But it may be time to learn a new skill. Next time, say "How about someone else babysit the slacker and give me someone competent to work with?" Raise your foot. Put it down. Repeat as necessary until it feels natural.

My 89-year-old aunt *lives alone with several cats and a blind 19-year-old dog. The house is stacked high with stuff, the animals have soiled the rugs, and the place smells. My wife tells me I need to help her out and get the place cleaned. I think it's my aunt's business, and I will gladly help if asked. What do you think?*

Distant Relative

Dear Distant,

Whew, talk about distant! Your wife asks you to help out your aunt. Now I'm asking you to help her out. Consider yourself asked.

I'm the 25-year-old *American daughter of an inter-racial marriage. My parents never let me see myself as an outsider and taught me to work hard and accept everyone as an equal. Hard work has paid off: I have a full-time job and own my home. Everything is fine, except when it comes to dating. Since I went to college, I've attracted more foreign-born than American men, and my mother seems to fear that the guys just want to become US citizens.*

Do I wait for an American man to wander into my life? Or ignore her fears and let myself enjoy a promising relationship with a respectable foreign man?

Torn Between Worlds

Dear Torn,

The short answer: Ignore your mother. She's done a terrific job of raising you and is clearly just trying to protect you now—perhaps from some of the struggles she endured in what may have been a racially complicated marriage. But she can't protect you in matters of the heart. Be open to finding Mr Right no matter where he happens to have been born. Go forth and fall in love! ■

ILLUSTRATED BY ISTVAN BANYAI

Greenheart

BY BITTU SAHGAL

Let's Respect Our Seas

Slipping on my snorkel and mask, I leaned over the edge of the fast-moving rubber dinghy, ducked my head under the crystal waters of the tropical Nicobar Sea and peered down into wonderland. There, before me, were over 200 spinner dolphins, vital, alive, fast and exuberant. One particularly young spinner calf caught my attention as it swam circles around its larger, two-metre-long mother. The little one seemed even more curious about us than we were about it and easily kept pace with our boat and its own pod, as it chased down its fast-food buffet ... a shoal of fish.

I was in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago in March 1998 with diver-conservationists Mitali Kakar, Sumer Verma and Sarang Kulkarni as part of an Indian Coast Guard-*Sanctuary Asia*-ReefWatch scuba diving survey to assess the impact of El Niño (actually, the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, a variation in the eastern Pacific Ocean atmosphere system that's known to trigger weather changes around the world). We had already dived at Tarmugli in the Mahatma Gandhi National Park in Wandoor, where we saw graveyards of bleached staghorn coral littering the coralline sands seabed. But that, we concluded, was a result of deforestation-related sedimentation. Subsequently, six of us undertook 14 more dives at Wandoor, Little Andaman, Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Trinket and Campbell Bay. Here we discovered gardens of mangroves, mudflats and corals all throbbing with marine life including crabs, sea fans, sponges, anemones, and shoals of yellowback fusiliers, snappers, jacks, sea snakes and marine turtles.

ANISH ANDHERIA/SANCTUARY PHOTOLIBRARY

Man bites shark

Earlier, the legendary marine explorer Jacques Cousteau had nicknamed the waters of Car Nicobar 'The Sea of Sharks'. But worryingly, on none of our 14 dives, punctuated by even more snorkelling surveys, did

we ever see even a single shark. El Niño, we concluded after our survey, seemed to have spared the coral formations of these islands, but sharkfin hunters from Indonesia and Thailand had meanwhile taken virtually every last shark out of these azure waters to feed insatiable Far Eastern markets.

I freely admit to being smitten by the sheer beauty and extravagance of the Andamans' tropical forests, living corals and golden sands, but my real reason for wanting to defend this marine biodiversity asylum has less to do with love, more with concern for the survival of the Indian people.

With colleagues and compatriots, I have spent over four decades trying to defend India's mountains, forests, coasts and oceans from misguided economic ambition. Yet the ecological threats, particularly that of climate change, deepen by the day.

A climate for survival

Scientists inform us that atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide on our planet have risen from 379 parts per million (ppm) in 2005, to about 390 ppm today (the highest level in the past 15 million years)!

They confirm that this is a consequence of global deforestation coupled with the fossil fuel-induced accumulation of 'greenhouse' gases. This climate destabilization triggers more frequent and more intense cyclones, droughts and floods than human societies have ever had to contend with. Coupled with glacial melt and sea-level rise, diseases and famines, climate change now poses a serious threat to the very survival of man and life on Earth itself.

I met Dr Sylvia Earle, one of the world's leading marine biologists, in Mexico, and she put it best: "We are taking 100 million tonnes of sea creatures out of our oceans and replacing them with plastic! Now, what sense does that make?"

Having worked closely with members of the fishing community, I know that these creatures hold the key to India's food security. Far more important than the lure of lucrative export markets, the nurseries and larders of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, and the (dwindling numbers of) cuttlefish, squid, sardines, mackerel they hold, directly or indirectly feed over 100 million Indians.

Protecting our corals, coasts, islands and mudflats from industrial pollution, overfishing and commercial reclamation—the very purpose of India's Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules—is thus a vital national priority. If protected, marine ecosystems would safely sequester carbon from the atmosphere, and use it to restore our living seas.

That surely is a win-win situation for man and beast... any way you look at it. ■

Bittu Sahgal is Editor of *Sanctuary Asia* magazine and a member of the National Board for Wildlife.

!n My Opinion

BY SIMON DOLAN

'Want to be a success in business? Avoid university!'

Further education may be a costly waste of time if you're hoping to be the next Dhirubhai Ambani

I was "asked to leave" school when I was 16. Apparently, I had too many questions and was generally disruptive. Little did I know that my headmaster was making the best possible career choice for me.

I couldn't go to university, so I started work on the bottom rung at a little accountancy firm, on £50 per week. But I worked hard, established my own practices and other businesses—and now I'm worth £100 million, 703rd in the [UK] *Sunday Times* Rich List. I'd guess most of my contemporaries who got to college went on to graduate-training courses and are now simply middle managers shuffling bits of paper.

Not one great entrepreneur I can think of completed a degree. Think Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Michael Dell—all college dropouts. In the UK, we have Sir Richard Branson,

ILLUSTRATED BY JASON FORD/HEART

Simon Dolan owns UK firms that include SJD Accountancy and Contractor Umbrella.

Richard Desmond, Sir Philip Green. Is it a recent thing? Well, no. Think Carnegie, Disney, Chanel and Ford.

My belief is that people are inherently good in business, but university sucks this ability out of you. To be a successful entrepreneur you need to be able to sell, work hard and not take rejection to heart. Don't these qualities exist in children? My six-year-old will ask me if he can have something and, if I say no, he doesn't get upset or embarrassed—he just thinks I must have misunderstood and asks me again. And again, and again. He doesn't always get a yes in the end, but it doesn't stop him asking if he can have a swimming pool with the world's tallest water slide, fountains, a bridge and a pet dolphin.

All kids have this natural persistence, curiosity and belief that anything is possible, until around the time they go into higher education.

Why? Well, university courses have evolved to suit very specific interests, particularly in recent years. Almost anything you can think of has a course somewhere—from media studies to geography to "surf science and technology." But this means kids leave school and spend three years doing a comfy but narrow course that doesn't give them much experience of the real world. At the same time, universities are under pressure to get good exam results, so tutors spoon-feed youngsters and set curricula that they regurgitate back.

All of this undermines the investigative spirit of youngsters, ability to question and sense of potential. And the prospect of thousands spent in tuition fees and huge predicted educational loan repayments won't help. If you leave university owing so much, are you going to try to start your own business or get a job based on your degree? You go for the job, of course, or all that money was wasted!

Not all university learning is by rote, you may cry—what about tutorials where students are encouraged to think about and debate ideas? But the problem then is what they debate. In my companies, we talk about how to get more customers, how to cut costs, how to outsmart our competitors—things that have a tangible outcome.

At university, you don't discuss anything you can measure or resolve. What was Shakespeare thinking when he wrote this or that line? I don't know, you don't know and neither of us will ever know. But students get used to thinking about things that don't matter. The harsh world of business is a long way removed from this.

Do I think a degree is a waste of time for everyone? No—my lawyer has and needs one, as does my doctor. But, of my 200 employees, not one was recruited on the basis of being a graduate. In fact, I don't even look for it on CVs. University

would be so much better from a business point of view if, instead of learning all the theories taught even on a marketing course, you were told how to pick up the phone and ask for what you need—something that would back up a child's natural ability to cajole. Or if, instead of spending six months learning how to write a business plan, you were told that you need to get up and do something.

But it'd be difficult to justify college education for that—so maybe you'd be better off starting at the bottom in a company and working your way up. When your friend, who went to college, joins you at your company three years later, who do you think will be better equipped to do the job?

What about those big financial firms that only accept graduates, you might ask? But they don't just want graduates; they want the elite. Do you have a chance of getting a first from Oxbridge? Forget it, then—financial firms don't want a degree in history from somewhere lesser known.

If you want to do a degree because you like learning for the sake of it, then good luck to you—with new-graduate unemployment at a high, you could argue that anyone taking on the cost of a course doesn't have much financial sense anyway. But if you want to get on in business, I'd suggest you spend a little money on just four books:

1. *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. A wonderful primer. A business is sales, and sales come from having great people skills (it inspired billionaire investor Warren Buffett).
2. *Action! Nothing Happens Until Something Moves* by Robert Ringer. All you need to know about the power of getting on with it.
3. *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. A vision of a world without business innovators (it inspired US economist and former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan).
4 *How to Make Millions Without a Degree* by Simon Dolan. Yes, I wrote it, but it shows you how to start your own company by someone who's actually done it rather well.

Read these and you'll be better equipped to succeed than any college graduate.

Do you agree? Would you rather have not gone to college and been as successful as this author? Write to editor.india@rd.com

BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY

Sign seen on a bus in south Wales, UK: "In the interests of passenger safety, boarding and alighting buses at traffic lights is strictly prohibited. Drivers are under strict instructions not to do so."

Word Power

BY HARRY MOUNT

Cookspeak

In the gastronomic word-soup that has been simmering in restaurants, spiced by TV shows such as *MasterChef* and *Khana Khazana*, a whole new family of words has been drizzled, sun-dried and flash-fried before making their way to our plates. Here's a tasty sample. **Answers on the next page.**

Answers on the next page.

1. **ceviche** (sirveesh) *n.*— A: hot liqueur. B: marinated starter. C: raw vegetable.

2. **aioli** (eye-owelee) *n.*— A: chopped potatoes. B: butter chicken. C: garlic mayonnaise.

3. **tagine** (tahzheen) *n.*— A: stringy meat. B: North African dish. C: honey glaze.

4. **flageolet** (flazh-eau-lay) *n.*— A: kidney bean. B: cold soup. C: beaten egg.

5. **goujon** *n.*—A: meat medallion. B: fruit chunk. C: deep-fried strip.

6. **eau de vie** *n.*— A: brandy. B: egg white. C: distilled water.

7. **flambé** *adj.*—A: dipped in sugar. B: covered with piecrust. C: heated to burn off spirits.

8. **pulque** (pullkay) *n.*— A: spun sugar. B: Mexican drink. C: cooked lettuce.

9. **daube** *n.*—A: stew. B: thick sauce. C: steak.

10. **lachryma Christi** *n.*— A: salty water. B: peach juice. C: Italian wine.

11. **fricandeau** (frick-ohn-doh) *n.*— A: meat slice. B: water jug. C: egg whisk.

12. **coulis** *n.*—A: iced lemon. B: fruit purée. C: sorbet.

13. **lees** *n.*—A: nettle juice. B: wine dregs. C: fermented milk.

14. **rösti** *n.*—A: beehive oven. B: salt garnish. C: fried potatoes.

15. **tapenade** (tap-uhn-ard) *n.*— A: olive paste. B: liver pâté. C: digestif.

WORD JOURNEY **Much cooking lingo comes from France. Think cuisine, menu, even restaurant. In more recent times, a number of Indian culinary words have regularly got into English dictionaries. They include basmati, chutney, pukka, (chicken) tikka, and of course there's curry.**

ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID HUMPHREYS

Answers

1. ceviche—*[B]* citrus-marinated seafood appetizer. "The prawns in lime juice produced a fine ceviche." Spanish *escabeche* (marinade).

2. aioli—*[C]* garlic mayonnaise. "The chips with aioli disappeared in seconds." Provençal French *ai* (garlic) and *oli* (oil).

3. tagine—*[B]* North African stew dish. "Tagines are popular in Morocco." Arabic *tajine* (clay pot).

4. flageolet—*[A]* kidney bean. "Jack planted plenty of flageolets." Latin *phaseolus* (bean).

5. goujon—*[C]* deep-fried strip of fish or chicken. "The halibut goujons staved off his hunger." French *gouger* (to gouge).

6. eau de vie—*[A]* spirits, especially brandy. "The eau de vie stopped his hands shaking." French *eau de vie* (water of life).

7. flambé—*[C]* cover food with spirits and burn off. "First tip: never flambé with petrol." French *flamber* (burn).

8. pulque—*[B]* Mexican drink made from fermented sap. "The pulque chaser was a bad idea." Nahuatl *puliuhki* (decomposed).

9. daube—*[A]* braised meat stew. "The daube was wine-based." Latin *dealbare* (whitewash).

10. lachryma Christi—*[C]* wine grown on Mount Vesuvius. "Lachryma Christi goes well with grilled chicken or pork." Latin *lachryma Christi* (Christ's tear).

11. fricandeau—*[A]* a slice of meat, often veal, from the leg. "The fricandeau was drenched in cider." French.

12. coulis—*[B]* fruit purée thin enough to pour. "The coulis lapped gently round the ice-cream dome." French *couler* (flow).

13. lees—*[B]* wine sediment. "He drank the bottle down to the lees." Middle English *lie* (dregs).

14. rösti—*[C]* Swiss fried potato dish. "When in training, professional tennis player Roger Federer avoids rösti." German *rosti* (fried potatoes).

15. tapenade—*[A]* chopped olives, anchovies and capers in olive oil. "Tapenade on bread is a simple starter." Provençal French *tapeno* (caper).

VOCABULARY RATINGS

- **6-8: Kitchen apprentice**
- **9-12: Sous-chef**
- **13-15: Certified master chef**

Challenge a friend to beat your score in our online game at readersdigest.com/wordpowergame

PERSONAL STORIES BEYOND THE CALL OF DAILY LIFE

The walls that changed me

He never dreamt that imprisonment would have an upside, but jail has been a life-changing experience

BY NORMAN YAMMINE

'Good night Yammine."

"Good night, Chief," I reply.

The cell door closes and I hear Chief's keys clinking as other doors clang shut further down the row. I take a couple of steps into my five-metre by three-metre cell and sit on my chair. I glance up at the window, covered in mesh, and think to myself, *This isn't a life, it's just an existence.*

Being in prison makes me feel as though I'm being buried alive. I am a puppet with people pulling strings so that I eat, sleep and wake when they want me to.

I lie on my bed as night falls and think the same thoughts over and over again. My head is full of the people I love: my parents, my brother, my fiancée, my friends.

I also think about how it all went so wrong, and imagine how I will make up for the all the time I've lost. I'm 27 years old, serving nine years for firearm offences and malicious wounding.

Every day I live the same routine and nothing changes except the people. Inmates depart for other prison facilities, or get released. Others arrive from different prisons, or fresh from custody. It's a continually revolving door.

But prison has changed me. When I committed my crimes I was a lost young boy, but now I am found. And jail has turned from a negative experience into a positive one. I have taken control of myself, and changed my ways.

When I was first incarcerated, my reading and writing were very ordinary, as my attendance at school was limited.

Walking around the prison yard, I would notice my fellow prisoners reading books and writing letters to friends and

Norman Yammine intends to continue writing once he is released, and plans to pen a memoir, which he hopes will help others avoid a life of crime. He asked that his payment for this article be donated to the Australian community organization Youth Off the Streets.

JAMES STEIDL/ISTOCKPHOTO

of all the resources available to me. I started to learn and they were baby steps, but I was determined to fulfil my goal. One day, I would read and write properly.

Now, five years later, after a lot of persistence, heartache and hard work, I have achieved my goal. I've also just completed a course as a reading mentor and am helping others who were just like me to read and write. They are so grateful for my help, and I'm so grateful to be able to give something back.

I have also completed a creative writing workshop here in Australia, where a wonderful teacher, Jane Granger, helped me to develop insights that inspire and inform my writing. I am so lucky to have been taught by her.

family, and it upset me because I couldn't do the same.

I longed for the day when I'd be able to sit in the sun, enjoy a cup of coffee and read a newspaper or book of my choice. I also longed to write letters to my friends and family, and share my thoughts and feelings.

I decided not to waste my time inside and, instead, take advantage

Jane gave me a copy of Reader's Digest and suggested I write my story, so I am here to tell you that no matter where you are, or how old you are, you should always have the strength to succeed and fulfil your dreams.

Someone once told me that "knowledge is power and is no weight to carry around" and I now know that to be true.

My journey of a thousand miles started with one step. I am now enjoying every moment of my success. Learning to read and write at a higher level has given me the inner strength to present myself in a more positive manner. I am also able to have better conversations with my family and friends.

The day I dreamed about has come: I now enjoy a cup of coffee with a book in my other hand.

And the day I've dreamed about has come true: I now enjoy my cup of coffee with a book in my other hand. Learning to read and write has changed my life and this article is my first piece of "proper" writing, and it won't be my last.

Writing has helped me express my feelings and I'm even writing poetry. This is "November Rain":

So many haters in one place
Trading war stories and pleading their case
I sit here and try to be kind
People think I am out of my mind
What I'm doing is changing my ways
Reversing the wrongdoings from back in the days
It's time from my life I can never get back
By the time I get out, people will think I've cracked
I know my "sorry" can never fix all the pain
But I pray for sunshine after the rain.

My Story is a regular feature about moving, challenging or amusing personal experiences beyond the call of daily life. We pay ₹6000 if your story is published. If you'd like to contribute a story, send it to: editor.india@rd.com

KIDSPEAK

I was planning a trip to Linking Road, a popular shopping destination, when my 4-year-old son Anurag piped up, "I'm not coming."

"Why?" I asked, puzzled, for he usually loved going out.

"Because," he complained, "all I see there are lots of legs."

Geeta Rebello, Mumbai

One day my mother's friend, who was eight months pregnant, came to visit. My three-year-old brother, Alex, was fascinated that he could place his hand on her stomach and feel the baby. The next morning, he woke with a rumbling tummy. "Mommy, Mommy, I must have a baby in my tummy!" he cried. "I can feel it kicking!"

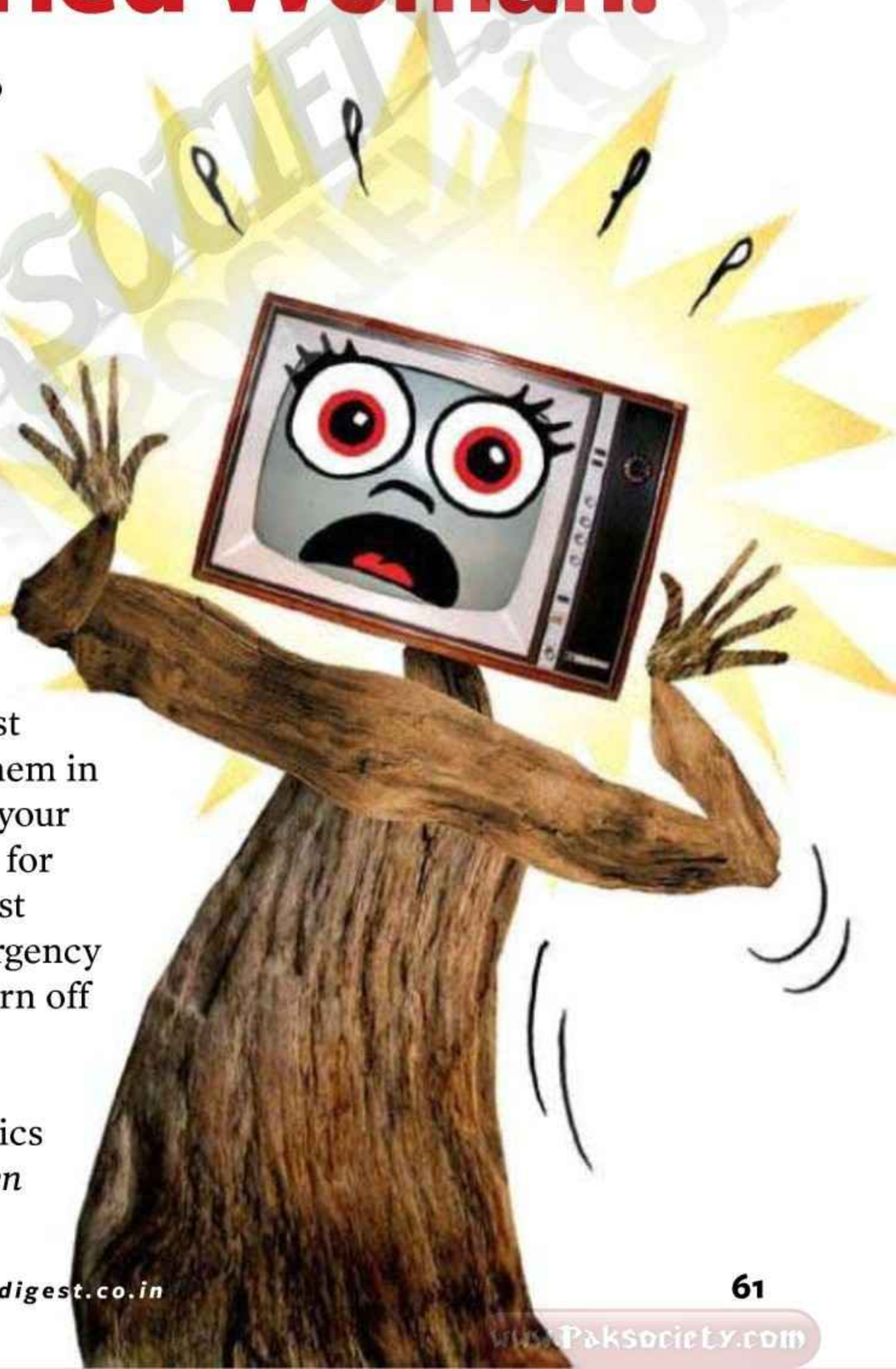
Calista Switzer

Have you ever been swallowed by an escalator or viciously attacked by a guitar? Neither has writer **Lenore Skenazy**. But after a hair-raising week in front of the TV set, she's become ...

The Petrified Woman!

Stop! Are you about to eat a scoop of onion dip? *It could cause meningitis.* Showing some kids around work? For God's sake, keep them away from *the stapler.* Planning a walk? Bring plenty of water or you could end up *in a coma*!

And let's not even talk about what could happen if you take the kids to the mall and find yourselves contemplating an escalator ride. Suffice it to say you should tie their shoes, insist they hold the handrail, place them in the centre of the step, and say your prayers (but not on your knees, for obvious reasons). "Perhaps most important, learn where the emergency shutoff button is so you can turn off the escalator if someone gets trapped while riding," says an American Academy of Pediatrics report, ominously titled *Hidden Dangers and Child Safety.*

ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID GOLDIN

That's right: If you want to be safe—and who doesn't?—every time you ride the escalator with a child, you should first make sure you can leap into action and slam off the calamitous contraption, mid-mangle.

That's not too much to think about when you're on a little shopping trip, is it?

I don't have a mattress; it could be toxic. I can't have a pet; I could trip over it.

I say it is. I say we are being warned about the weirdest, wildest, least likely, and most far-fetched, ill-founded and downright bizarre possibilities to the point where we are being scared stupid. "Watch out" mania rules the media. As US comedienne Ellen DeGeneres joked in her best newscaster voice, "It could be the most deadly thing in the world, and you may be having it for dinner. We'll tell you what it is tonight at 11." With warnings coming at us thick and fast from every media source—we are in danger (danger!) of becoming too scared to even get off the couch and go to the bathroom (which is probably just as well because did you know there are *germs* lurking in the toilet bowl? Pretty scary!).

All the warnings above are real; the stapler one came from a friend's inter-office memo. But they're just the tip of the iceberg. (Watch out for those too!) For about a month, I watched TV, cruised the Internet, and read a bunch of books, magazines, and e-mail "tips" to see what the average person gets warned about in the course of everyday life.

The result? I am typing this from inside a giant safe-deposit box. You can feed me—from a hole I drilled in the side—but no onion dip please. I don't have a cellphone, because it could give me a brain tumour. I don't have a bottle of water, because the plastic could disrupt my endocrine receptors and turn me into a woman. Oh, wait. I already am.

Well ... see?

I don't have a mattress, because the fumes could be toxic. I don't eat meat; it could give me asthma. I can't have a pet; I could trip over it. I can't wash my hair, because shampoo could be carcinogenic (and also because I'm in a box). But I can't leave the box and go to the grocery store, because I might be tempted to put my kid in a shopping cart. And according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "parents are strongly encouraged to seek alternatives to transporting their child in a shopping cart until an effective revised performance standard for shopping cart safety is implemented..."

That's right: The modern shopping cart is just too dangerous. Parents must come up with an alternative. Maybe a dog sledge?

A mini car? A kid-size version of those exercise balls?

Oh, well, I probably shouldn't leave my box anyway, because if I go out in the sun, it could give me cancer. Then again, so could sunscreen. Then again ...

Oh, heck, I'm not really in a box. That was just a bit of hyperbole, a trick I learnt from the warning industry itself. It works this way: The media will dig up some new study or, alternatively, find some tragic example of something really strange that may sort of prove that someone somewhere is somehow in at least a smidgen of danger. The next thing you know, it's "Why you should never ______" (fill in a verb). Or "Up next! Is your ______ (fill in a noun) dangerous?" The answer to the latter is always "Yes!"

Let's take a look at some of the warnings out there:

WATCH OUT FOR DIP!

Dr Mehmet Oz, the surgeon, author, TV host and commentator was celebrating what he and his family likes to call "Super *Germ* Sunday."

What fun they must be.

Anyway, Dr Oz had some woman serve dip at her church, and then he sent the dip remains to a lab to see what was in it, besides the inevitable onion soup mix.

Guess what. The lab discovered Group B *streptococcus*, bacteria that are generally found in the intestinal tract and can probably be traced to the detested double-dippers—people who take a "germy" second dip after biting the chip or veggie. Furthermore, said Dr Oz, these bacteria can lead to things like ... meningitis!

He neglected to add that strep B is usually a hazard only to newborns (who aren't big dip enthusiasts), and bacterial meningitis is quite rare in the developed world. Instead, he left viewers ready to lynch the next guy who sticks a half-chomped chip in the dip.

But it's not just dip that's going to kill you. Dr Oz has devoted other segments to the dangers of cosmetics-counter makeup (which he recommends you spray with disinfectant), tanning beds, shoes, nail salons, and that silent scourge: the mints you get next to the cash register in restaurants. Really, he did a whole big thing on these, and his grossed-out audience swore off them forever.

As if so many millions have been felled by free mints.

In Dr Oz's world, pretty much anything that anyone else has ever touched, you shouldn't. He considers this common sense. I consider it obsessive-compulsive disorder. Since we're both alive and healthy, you can pick your camp.

Mine gets to keep eating free mints.

WATCH OUT FOR OVERHEATING!

Warning! "Hot weather can have a dire effect on senior health," reads

the website Everyday Inflated Fears. Er, sorry—Everyday Health. So what are the symptoms of overheating? You'll never guess. Tops on the list: *thirst!* Then come those ever so subtle hints including "staggering," "fainting," "high body temperature," and, in case you still didn't get the message, "coma."

We hear so many warnings that real ones and trippy ones get jumbled together.

My God, is there any way to avoid this stealthy danger? Thankfully, yes. Try these obscure but possibly helpful remedies: "Drink plenty of liquids." Also: "Avoid exercising in the heat." And: "Cover windows that are in direct sunlight." Think about it?

Not that I ever want to see seniors suffer from overheating, but I also don't want to see seniors suffer from being treated as if they've got sawdust for brains. Anyone who's been around for 60 or more years has probably figured out by now that when you're thirsty, you should drink, and when you're staggering, it's time to take a break. Same goes for when you're in a coma.

WATCH OUT FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS!

"You don't want your child to live in a bubble ..., but remember that the more chances you take, the more likely your child will be injured or killed by an accident," reads the passive-aggressive Hidden Dangers to Your Child's Safety page on *about.com*.

And so it warns about the "hidden dangers" of bouncy houses and parade floats ("which can run over a child along the parade route") and my favourite new fear, "musical instruments, such as a guitar, that can hurt a young child who is playing with the string ... if one of the strings that is under high tension breaks, flying into his eye, or scratches his face."

Forget the terrible grammar. To me, that is the gold standard of warnings: a warning about an item that has been around almost forever and never been associated with any danger except to the eardrums of parents and music teachers. And now it's a bona fide health hazard! To come up with not just one but two possible injuries from a guitar takes warning genius. My hat is off to you, Child Safety Basic writers. (I just hope it doesn't accidentally hit you in the eye and scratch your cornea, possibly causing blindness.)

WATCH OUT! THAT WARNING WAS WRITTEN BY LAWYERS ON DRUGS!

A mobile company put out a set of instructions for its customers, encouraging them to "use your phone

in a safe and sensible manner." One of these "sensible" tips? "If your device rings and you discover it's in the backseat, do *not* crawl over the seat to answer it while driving."

That's verbatim. And it pretty much illustrates the whole problem. We get so many warnings flying at us that real dangers (drunk driving) and the almost hallucinatory ones (backseat-climbing driving) get jumbled together. What's really going to kill us? A kamikaze float? Or sitting in the La-Z-Boy recliner watching the news and overdosing on chips?

The fact is, the more strange and striking the warning, the less likely it is to be true, says David Freedman, author of *Wrong: Why Experts Keep Failing Us—And How to Know When Not to Trust Them.* We viewers tune in to the shocking studies because for some strange reason we like to be scared. As kids, we had ghost stories. As adults, we have health stories. Either way, we listen up because something that seemed so innocent is about to kill us! But shouldn't it have killed us already? If the world is full of such horrible ills, why are we living longer than ever?

Turns out, we live in very safe times. Not perfectly safe; nothing is. But safe enough that instead of worrying about diphtheria, we're worrying about dip.

Pay attention to your health—and a little less to the health scare of the day—and you'll be fine. Provided, that is, you watch out for that onion dip, and the shopping carts, and your kid's pockets, and the top button on your shirt, and ...

THAT'S LIFE!

From the time Buzz was a puppy, he always hated to have a bath. As he grew to 39 kilos, it would take the whole family, strategically placed in the house, to get him into the bathroom. Once we got him to the door, he'd put all fours on the door frame, whimpering and crying. One person would have to hold him in the tub while the other washed him.

One year I had surgery on my knee and I was on crutches for over six months—a long time for Buzz to go without a bath. He was lying beside me one afternoon, and I looked at him and said, "You know, Buzz, you just have to have a bath." He simply got up and walked down the hallway to the bathroom. I followed. And there he was—in the tub.

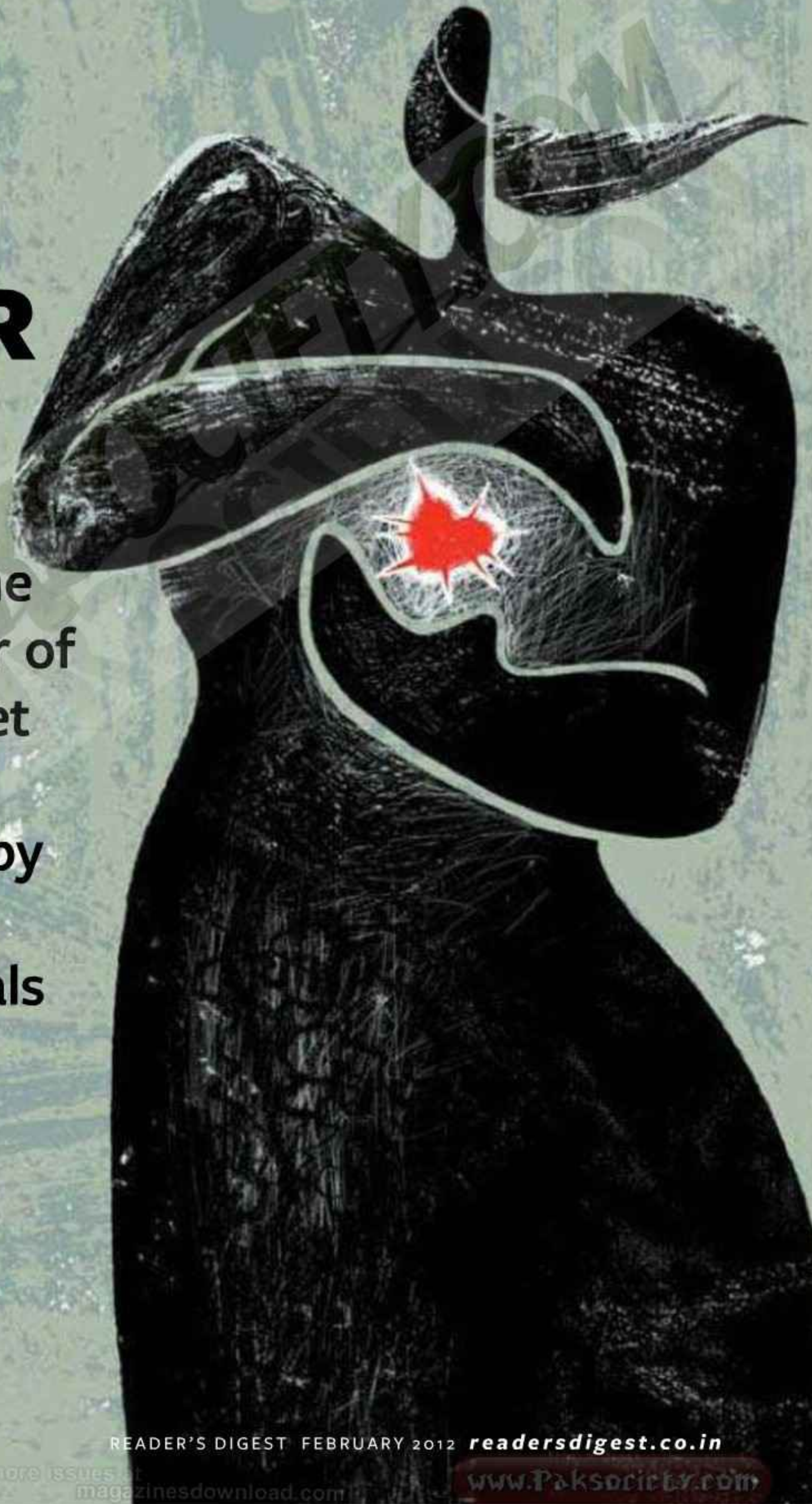
Lauren Osgood

An insurance worker won an undisclosed amount in compensation from her employer Aviva after being injured at work. Linda Riley from Newburgh, Scotland, fell over a pile of accident claim forms.

Heart Attack!

WHY WOMEN ARE AT GREATER RISK

Heart disease is the biggest silent killer of women in India, yet the symptoms go widely unnoticed by both patients and health professionals

BY KAMALA THIAGARAJAN

When Smita Jadhav, a 37-year-old teacher at a Mumbai polytechnic, felt a burning sensation in her chest, she put it down to acidity, stress associated with her recent promotion at work and erratic meal timings. But when the uneasiness continued late into the night, she met her family doctor. "Have an ice-cream and tell me how you feel," the doctor told Smita, after giving her an injection. When the uneasiness did not subside after 20 minutes, the doctor advised that Smita be taken to a hospital. There, an ECG revealed she'd had a minor heart attack. Smita was admitted to an ICU and discharged after 11 days of treatment.

Meanwhile, a close relative, concerned by the fact that Smita's 33-year-old younger sister had passed away a year earlier following a sudden heart attack, recommended that she consult the IPC Heart Care Centre in Mumbai. IPC specialists recommended lifestyle changes for Smita: yoga, a diet plan and regular walking.

Though the sisters had a family history of diabetes and heart disease, both of them had been so young when they had heart attacks that such women would seem like exceptions to the rule, feels Dr Pratiksha G. Gandhi, preventive cardiologist and chairperson of IPC Heart Care. "But in the past two years, out of an average 50 to 60 heart patients I meet daily, 40 percent are women. A few years ago women made up barely 15 percent. These women come from every social class—rich or poor, they are equally at risk."

Had Smita's condition been detected earlier, the attack could have been avoided. Lifestyle modifications such as a low-fat diet, regular exercise, yoga and meditation, along with periodic check-ups including treadmill tests and a lipid profile could prevent almost 80 percent of heart attacks. Yet women face many disadvantages.

Women are Different

"One in nine women between the ages of 45 and 65 develop symptoms of some form of cardiovascular disease," says cardiologist K.K. Aggarwal of Delhi's Moolchand Hospital. "More disturbing is the fact that fewer women get timely medical attention when compared to men," adds Dr Aggarwal, a Padma Shri recipient and president of the Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI). "So, for women, heart disease is the most serious killer."

Dr K.M. Cherian, chairman and CEO of the Chennai-based Frontier Lifeline & Dr K.M. Cherian Heart Foundation, too, voices his concern about the apparent lack of awareness here, both among healthcare professionals and the general public, adding: "The increasing incidence of diabetes in younger Indian women takes away

ILLUSTRATED BY SAMEER KULAVOOR

"Stress levels in women have skyrocketed both at home and at the workplace, increasing the risk of heart disease.

the pre-menopausal protection from heart disease. The use of hormonal contraceptives and smoking—both active and passive—have also increased the risk of heart disease in young women."

Moreover, a woman doesn't always experience the familiar symptoms of heart attack. She needs to look out for non-typical symptoms like pain in her back, jaw or abdomen, nausea and vomiting, rather than the classic chest pain. "If a woman experiences any chest discomfort or stomach pain accompanied by difficulty in breathing or excessive perspiration, the family should seek medical help immediately," adds Dr Cherian.

Conditioned to think of heart disease as primarily a male problem, many doctors tend to dismiss these signs in women. "A woman who approaches her GP with, say, chest pain is less likely to be treated for a heart attack or even referred for an ECG or angiogram," says Dr J. Sangumani, professor of medicine at Madurai Medical College, Madurai. "Women simply don't put their health first, and there's a stigma associated with medical check-ups. Traditional Indian women are often uncomfortable with the idea of approaching a male GP or cardiologist. And it doesn't help that stress levels in women's lives have skyrocketed both at the workplace and at home. Without proper outlets to deal with it, they tend to repress their feelings. All this places them at higher risk of heart disease than ever before."

Routine Check-ups are Vital

For a woman to get the same level of care as a man, it seems she must also demonstrate that her heart disease is serious—usually by having a heart attack! There's a clear bias. "If a woman has to receive the same attention as a man, her heart attack needs to be very severe and the symptoms more apparent," avers Dr Sangumani. "This explains many sudden deaths among women."

Dr K.K. Aggarwal of HCFI, too, agrees that the dangers are indeed greater for women. "A man is often given immediate medical attention, no matter where he is. In many cases, women only seek help hours after pain develops, often because no other family member may be at home to take her to hospital at the time."

That's why routine check-ups are

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY ELIZABETH ADLAM

vital. Even here, women must be vigilant and insist that health professionals perform tests for heart disease very thoroughly: When a woman is referred to a cardiologist for basic investigations, she is more likely—with coronary arteries narrower than in men—to register a normal ECG and still have a silent heart disease.

"Even when heart attack symptoms manifest, a woman's ECG reading may be normal," says Dr Aggarwal. "If a woman has a strong family history of heart trouble and is experiencing symptoms like breathlessness and fatigue, even after an ECG shows everything to be normal, doctors should prescribe a stress echocardiogram, which will be able to better indicate any blockages."

An angiogram, too, may not always spot the more diffuse build-up of plaques that often form in a woman's coronary arteries. (In fact, an angio done for Smita Jadhav showed things were normal, even after her heart attack.) Many women with small-vessel heart disease may go on to develop major blocks in about a decade.

Tests such as stress echocardiography, or myocardial perfusion imaging (MPI, also known as nuclear scanning), where an isotope injection is given after a patient, if able, has been on an exercise bike or treadmill, are more reliable.

"MPI would be the ideal preliminary test for detecting cardiac problems in women," says Professor V.S. Prakash, president of the Cardiology Society of India's Bangalore chapter and head of cardiology at the city's Ramaiah Medical College. "In all our major cities, people now have access to such reliable diagnostic tests."

Early Precautions

"Heart disease is often a disease of ignorance," says Dr Gandhi, "and prevention is the only vaccination against it."

By the time a woman sees a specialist, her heart may have sustained significant damage. So women need to be aware and take their health into their own hands. "Cholesterol is present even in the arteries of newborns and its accumulation can get accelerated by an unhealthy lifestyle.

"Cholesterol is present even in the arteries of newborns. Its accumulation gets accelerated by an unhealthy lifestyle.

Physical activity and healthful food habits can reduce the risk. Avoid junk food from early childhood," warns Dr K.M. Cherian.

New non-invasive scans are able to see plaques building within arterial walls years before they cause damage, enabling more accurate and speedy diagnosis in women *and* men.

Though scanning facilities are now widely available in the bigger clinics and diagnostic centres across the country, they are still expensive at around ₹12,000 and above per scan. Your employer (or your spouse's) might pay for that. If not, take medical insurance early, while you are still free of symptoms. If it's mediclaim, some insurance companies may cover you only if hospitalization is also involved, so check the fine print in the policy and discuss it with the agent before signing up.

"All women above the age of 30 must include a heart examination and lipid profile test in their annual check-ups to assess their risk," says Dr Aggarwal. "If you have a strong family history of heart disease, regular check-ups should begin from your twenties. It's a simple step that can save your life or that of a family member."

PARLIAMENTARY PULSE

Politicians can be funny, Here are some examples—from Old Blighty:

"The Green Belt is a Labour initiative and we intend to build on it."

John Prescott

"Do you know what Margaret Thatcher did in her first Budget? Introduced VAT on yachts! It somewhat ruined my retirement."

Edward Heath

"I have as much chance of becoming prime minister as being decapitated by a Frisbee or of finding Elvis." *Boris Johnson*

"It has been said that there is no fool like an old fool, except a young fool. But the young fool has first to grow up to be an old fool to realize what a damn fool he was when he was a young fool." *Harold Macmillan*

Go on... Make us laugh!

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Life and **Off Base:** Anecdotes from your experience which reveal human nature and provide appealing or humorous sidelights on everyday life—civilian or military—in India.

@ Work: Funny, insightful things that happen at your office or other workplace.

For original items used in **Laughter, Quotes** and elsewhere, we pay according to published word count.

₹350 to the *first* contributor of an item we use—a joke, anecdote, quip or quote—that has been previously published in print or the Internet, or broadcast on radio or TV.

All your original contributions, which should be less than 300 words, become our property upon publication and payment. Previously published material must have the source's name, date and page number. Please also include your name, address, e-mail ID, if any, and phone number. Address your submission, mentioning the appropriate feature to: Reader's Digest, 45 Vaju Kotak Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400001.

Jokes and other anecdotes may also be sent by e-mail: editor.india@rd.com (but please avoid attachments, if it is only text). We receive many contributions, so they cannot be individually acknowledged, but if we are likely to publish them, you will hear from us.
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Smitten

Four stories from around the world, where love blossomed and partners, whether near or far, cherished each other in sickness and in health

Love's Perfect Circle

"Okay, bye, see you when Prashant gets married" was the refrain with which many guests bid my parents farewell as they left after my younger brother's wedding in our hometown of Hubli, Karnataka. It must have been taboo to talk of *me* getting married. My parents and brother worried deeply about it, but relatives deliberately overlooked me, naming my younger cousin Prashant as next in line.

I was written off the marriage market.

I returned to Mumbai, where I worked. The family had stopped asking the annoying 'When-are-you-getting-hitched?' genre of questions. That was something I'd longed for when things had been normal, but my wish had been granted at a huge cost. Cancer in its third stage isn't so forgiving but it somehow let me off with only a few scars and, after all the chemo, a freshly sprouting curly mop instead of my original long, straight hair.

Yet, such indifference breeds a reckless abandonment. I started living life in fast forward. I travelled, took a lot of photographs, joined travel websites, travelled even more. I started a small company making ad films. I did everything I wanted to do

ROYCE DEGRIE/ISTOCKPHOTO

and no one could ever stop me.

The buzz was exhilarating but one tiny detail slipped out of my radar. There was someone regularly visiting my Orkut social networking profile, someone I'd once had an online argument with on the site's medical community page. I'd almost forgotten about him.

Posted at a remote Air Force station in eastern India, my travel photographs fascinated this young man. Wherever I went, be it the iron-ore mines of Kiruna in Sweden or the Nohkalikai Falls in Meghalaya, he virtually travelled with me, through my photos and blog.

Wing Commander Parthasarathi Ghana finally contacted me in April 2008 through the blog. We got chatting online and then over the phone. A doctor, he was a specialist in internal medicine—and single.

I should have jumped with joy, but I had stopped living in any romantic bubble years ago. Marriage was for *them!* But it's amazing—the perfect circles life can draw. Partha was with the same Army Medical Corps my father had retired from! Anyhow, this young Oriya doctor fascinated me with his anecdotes and his rock-steady philosophy of life. And contrary to expectations, my cancer story only brought the good doctor even closer. We fell in love although we'd, as they say, never met offline.

"Why not come down to Mumbai?" I asked.

"No, I can't get leave now," he said.

So I flew down to Coimbatore, where he was then posted, and met him.

"Will you marry me?" he said.

"Yes."

That October, six months after Partha and I started our online meetings, my mother became severely ill. "Why not meet Mama?" I requested Partha. Having just lost his father, he understood the situation well and made a quick day trip to Hubli. Mother asked all of us to step out of the room and spoke to him alone. She passed away a month later. None of us know

Vandana and Partha on vacation in Goa.

VANDANA NATU GHANA

anything about that conversation till today, and I've never asked Partha. I like to imagine that God heard Mama's favourite hymn, *Krishna nee begane baaro* [Oh, Krishna, please come quickly], and sent Parthasarathi in person to let her go peacefully. Remember, as Arjuna's legendary charioteer, Krishna too was known as Parthasarathi.

In February 2009, as relatives bid my father farewell, newlyweds Partha and I looked on with folded hands. "Okay, bye, see you now at Prashant's wedding," many of them said to Papa as they left the same marriage hall. Only this time they were right. Happily, my cousin Prashant too got married soon afterwards.

VANDANA NATU GHANA, New Delhi

Love Beyond Boundaries

Gardez is among the coldest and most desolate places in Afghanistan. Hiroko Takagi, a reports officer from Japan working for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), had been sent from New York to Gardez on a project, which Basil Massey, a former Indian Army colonel, was managing.

There was literally no room at the UN guesthouse for Hiroko, so Basil gave up his room for her and bunked down on the floor of a half-built office. It was freezing.

"People had written me off as a confirmed bachelor," says Basil, who was 39 when he met Hiroko.

Thirty-two-year-old Hiroko, on the other hand, had plans. During the farewell party her colleagues had thrown for her in New York, she'd jokingly made the bold declaration that she would find a husband. Soon afterwards, somebody was sleeping on the cold, hard floor for her!

For Hiroko and Basil, deciding on marriage was easy—they were both ready. Hiroko had only one precondition. She told Basil, "If we are going to be in separate duty stations, it shouldn't be for more than a year."

Hiroko and Basil got married in Agra.

THE MASSEYS

They got engaged nine months after they started dating and were married in Agra less than a year later. But what came after was the hard part. Both had thriving careers that sent them to the far reaches of the planet.

Hiroko and Basil stayed in Afghanistan for two more years following their marriage. After that, staying together seemed impossible. In 2007, Basil moved to Khartoum, Sudan, while Hiroko went to New Delhi on a temporary assignment. Hiroko was posted to East Timor later that year, while Basil stayed on in Khartoum.

With the six-hour time difference, Hiroko would spend her lunch hour waiting to talk to Basil on Skype before his breakfast. "And because of odd flight connections, it took me three days to make it to East Timor from Sudan," Basil recalls.

Their lives were put to the test in 2008. Hiroko experienced a sudden hearing loss. Doctors didn't know what happened. Six months later, she contracted dengue fever and had to be evacuated to Australia. Hiroko recovered, but enough was enough.

For years, Basil and Hiroko yearned to live together in either of their countries. With twins, born in 2010, they both decided to leave their UN jobs to settle in Delhi. Last year, they started Inja World (*www.injaworld.com*), their own travel-holiday business in Delhi. "We were always close, but we'd taken our togetherness for granted," says Hiroko.

"Now that we're working on our own," adds Basil, "we can all be together without worrying about staying apart."

DORA CHEOK

Ageless Love

The voice on the phone sounded familiar, though I hadn't heard it in 57 years. My first boyfriend—my first love—was calling.

We talked about old times. I told him I was widowed after 50 years of marriage and four children. He said his wife of 30 years, too, had passed away. Then he dropped the bomb that would change both our lives. Allan had been diagnosed with lung disease years before, but his doctor had recently told him he had mere weeks to live.

After several more conversations, I realized his health was slowly deteriorating. I couldn't bear the thought of him dying alone. So, to his surprise and mine, I hopped on a plane for Canada's West Coast to be with him through this terrible time.

It was as if we had never been apart. A miracle then happened: As we held each other, we felt my strength flow into him. A month later, his doctor was astounded and asked what we had done to cause such a marked improvement in Allan's health. We could only answer that it must be love.

I persuaded Allan to come live with me on the East Coast for as long as he had left. So we drove across Canada to Nova Scotia and, a year later, we got married. We enjoyed ourselves, had a lot of fun and never wasted a minute of the precious time we had.

Allan passed away just before our third anniversary. We spent almost four years together—glorious years.

BARBARA EDWARDS, Canada

Love Knows No Hardship

MELANIE FAITH DOVE

John McLaughlin keeps Louise happy.

Irish bricklayer John McLaughlin was a 39-year-old divorced father of two when he met divorcee Louise, 22, in 1997. "John told me he loved me the first week we met," she smiles. "And he has continued to tell me so every day since."

But their cosy life together changed on the day a blood vessel burst in John's brain. For nine weeks he skittered between life and death. Doctors said if he did survive, he would be quadriplegic, in need of full-time nursing.

John spent six months in a neurology ward, then two years in a nursing home. Louise visited daily. "Every day, I told him not to die. I told him we were still going to live happily ever after," says Louise. "When I told my family and friends I was going to take him to my house to stay, they worried about what it meant for my future, but I knew if I didn't, my life would never really be complete."

The wedding took place in 2005. Louise retrained as a nurse and became her husband's carer. It's not how things used to be, but it's still intimacy. "When someone you love almost dies in front of you, it changes everything," says Louise. John turns his head to look at his wife and smiles. "She's a rare person for taking me on," he whispers, his eyes misting over. "I'm not easy to live with."

Louise shakes her head. "I love my life, and I wouldn't change it. I couldn't fix John, but I could bring him home, look after him and love him. And that's been easy."

SUZY ZAIL, Condensed from *Smitten: 12 Stories of Enduring Love* (The Five Mile Press, Australia)

FORE!

A friend lost his golf clubs and reported it. When a policewoman asked if the clubs had any distinguishing features, my friend said yes—whenever he hit the ball it always went in the wrong direction. "Oh," said the policewoman. "My husband too has a set of those." *Margaret Crawford*

Valentine's Day

Cupid is on the attack worldwide. The February 14 love fest started in the UK, spread to the US and is now popping up in Asia and Europe

BY ROBERT KIENER

Lisa gives Ralph a valentine in the US television series *The Simpsons*.

Quick Study

Valentine Daze

Pucker up; it's that time of year again. Couples—and wannabe couples—around the world will soon begin the annual search for the perfect card, candy or gift that says "I love you." Valentine's Day, February 14th, is the day that seals more relationships with a kiss than any other. Millions of eager suitors will buy roses for their girlfriends. A study by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India estimates that it has become a ₹12,000 crore ($2.6 billion) business here. But the US tops with an estimated $14 billion spent annually on things associated with Valentine's Day.

Murky Origins

Although Valentine's Day is thought to be named after a Christian saint, there's nothing remotely religious about this day. There are references linking Valentine's Day to courtship in the Middle Ages but it wasn't until the late 18th century that the British began sending Valentine cards to one another. Americans adopted the custom and ran with it, turning February 14th into a mass-marketer's dream day of chocolate, cards, flowers, and, lest we forget, love. Today Valentine's Day is popping up in lots of places. Admittedly, in countries where it's a relatively recent import—it was barely known in India before the arrival of cable TV in the early 1990s—it's mainly celebrated by younger people.

Not Everyone's a Fan

Plenty of people loathe February 14th, among them single, divorced or just plain depressed folks who suffer from what's been termed "the Valentine's Day Blues." Others are put off by the over-hyped marketing.

Elsewhere, it's been criticized as too Western, too Christian or immoral. Saudi Arabia bans the sale of red roses and other Valentine's Day items, because it's a Western holiday named after a Christian saint. Malaysian religious authorities arrested more than 100 Muslim couples for celebrating Valentine's Day in 2011 and Iran banned the printing of V-Day related materials. In India, there have been attempts to foil the celebrations.

> **"Love may not make the world go round, but I must admit that it makes the ride worthwhile."**
>
> *—attributed to Sean Connery, actor*

Why Cupid?

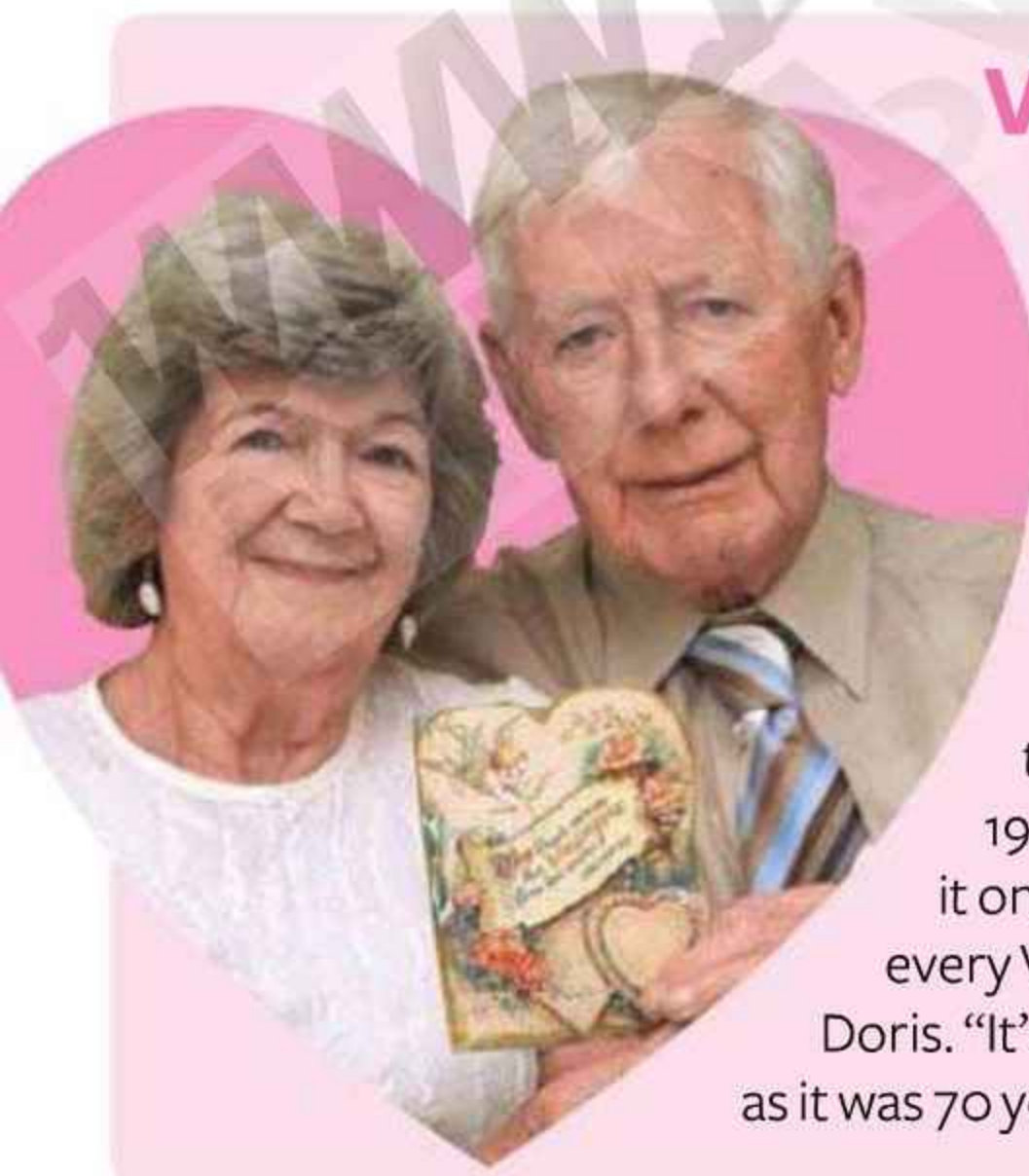
How did a chunky, naked baby with wings, a bow and an arrow come to symbolize romance? Meet Cupid, offspring of the Roman god Venus. Named after the Latin word for "desire" (*cupido*), legend has it that the chubby cherub can cause a victim to fall in love merely by shooting a golden arrow into his or her heart.

Puppy Love

Americans spend an estimated $367 million on Valentine's Day presents for their pets.

> **"Dear Valentine, I love you. Whoever you are."**
> —Sally, in *Peanuts*

> **Forget love—I'd rather fall in chocolate.'**
> —Anonymous

On a display of "I love you only" Valentine cards: "Now available in multi-packs."

Valentines forever

Harry Ward, 88, of England never forgets his wife Doris's Valentine's Day card. He was 17 and gave it to her before boarding a train on February 14, 1941, to go to war. "I put it on our mantelpiece every Valentine's Day," says Doris. "It's as special to me now as it was 70 years ago."

Fancy a trip?

Heart-shaped Galesnjak is called "Lovers' Island." It lies off the Croatian coast. Take chocolate, food, water and a bed; the island is uninhabited.

Japanese chocolate companies make 50% of their annual sales over Valentine's Day.

Around the World

JAPAN Because of a supposed error in early Valentine's Day candy ads, women thought they were supposed to give men sweets—instead of the other way around. Candy makers dubbed March 14th as a "reply day" called "White Day" and urged men to give chocolates to the women. It worked. The custom caught on.

THAILAND Lovebirds flock to Bangkok's Bang Rak district, Thailand's "Village of Love," to be married on Valentine's Day. They believe the aptly named village will ensure them a lasting marriage, and they begin lining up outside the Bang Rak district office in the wee hours of the morning.

ITALY Each year the city of Verona, where Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is set, receives about 1000 letters addressed to Juliet on Valentine's Day.

AUSTRALIA A family planning organization celebrates National Condom Day on February 14, encouraging lovers to "say it with flowers, do it with condoms."

USA One study claims 53% of women in America would dump their boyfriend if they did not get them anything for Valentine's Day. Another US study found that 38% of men have considered ending a relationship rather than face the task of choosing a "really good" gift for their partner.

INDIA In 2009, members of the Sri Ram Sene attacked women in a pub in Mangalore, and their leader Pramod Muthalik announced he'd deal harshly with anybody celebrating Valentine's Day. A group of young women decided to fight back by asking women all over the country to mail the organization pink panties. It got thousands in the mail; more than 3000 women participated in the campaign. It seems to have worked. V-Days since then have been relatively peaceful.

Lovers' Destination

Paris may be the world's most romantic city but the French villages of Saint Valentin and Roquemaure are competing hard. Every year, on the weekend closest to February 14, Saint Valentin offers lovers the chance to marry in a rose-covered garden and pin love notes on the Tree of Vows. Roquemaure's "lovers' festival" boasts 19th-century costumes and music.

Anne McConnell of the US introduced her boyfriend Hans, whom she'd met over the Internet, to her uncle. Fascinated, her uncle asked Hans what kind of line he had used to pick Anne up.
"I just used a regular 56K modem," said Hans. ■

OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ©SHANE O'BRIEN/GETTY; HIPDOGGIE.COM; ©SHUTTERSTOCK; ©GEOEYE/GOOGLE; THIS PAGE: BRIDE AND GROOM, ©GETTY

Outrageous!

AN OPEN PHOTO-EDITORIAL

The signs ban two wheelers on this bridge. The ban is for your safety, but look who's riding!

MULTIVISION GRAPHICS

The signs at the J.J. Flyover in the heart of Mumbai clearly ban two wheelers. That was decreed in April 2010, following very high accidents rates involving motorbikes and scooters on this smooth, racetrack-like 2.5 kilometre-long overbridge.

Yet bikers continue to lose their lives—like the demise of 22-year-old Abhishek Kadam, following his January 7th crash on the flyover. The news was widely reported. Yet, the very next day, 109 bikers were booked for illegally taking the same flyover, many without helmets.

This reflects the attitude of bikers all over India. The latest report from the Ministry of Road Transport maintains that deaths from two-wheeler accidents increased by an alarming 25% in just one year—from 19,728 in 2009 to 24,616 in 2010.

It's not bikers alone who are at fault. Helmet laws are not enforced. Fines are meagre and seldom paid, because traffic cops can be lax, if not corrupt. And driving tests are a farce. With inadequate public transport everywhere, two-wheelers keep increasing. Among vehicle categories, they account for the highest share (24%) of all road mishaps.

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Off Base

HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

During a customary introduction parade at our military hospital, the general was making enquiries. Reaching a newly commissioned lady doctor, he said, "I understand they teach you a lot in college nowadays."

"Yes," she replied. "At first it was very regular but later it subsided."

Hearing that, the general looked confused but said nothing more. Later, when asked to clarify, the lady blurted out: "Teach?! Oh God, I heard it as *tease*..."

Colonel (retd) Sridhar Srinivasan, MD, Nashik

After being wounded by an improvised explosive device while in service, I was sent to a mental-health professional. His first question: "Do you think there are people trying to get you?"

Bernard Bromley

I recently returned to work after a year abroad with the US Army Reserve. On my first day back, a visitor from headquarters took me aside.

"How are you?" he asked, looking concerned. "Do you feel all right?"

"I'm fine," I replied, nonplussed.

"Great!" he said. "I heard that you were away from work for a year because you were in a wreck."

It took a minute before it dawned on me what he meant. "Iraq," I said finally. "I've just come back from Iraq."

Derek Schneider

I'm always proud to wear a T-shirt that declares "My Son Is a Navy SEAL." I was wearing it in a supermarket when an equally proud mother pointed at my shirt and said, "My son's on a swimming team too."

Mary Devlin

Your favourite new joke or one-liner might be worth ₹1000. Send it to us at the Editorial address or by e-mail.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAYADEV BABU

To the young Poles, a four-month sailing trip to the Caribbean was a dream come true. Then the storm hit!

BY JOHN DYSON

Journey

PHOTOS: ZBIGNIEW BOSEK

to HELL

Dawn in the Atlantic and a strong gale. Black, ugly waves rise above the tall ship's rail then fall with a roar and a hiss. The two tall masts lean to the wind and the rigging thrums with strain. A single square sail is set, hard as iron.

At the helm, his clothes hammered flat and salt pricking his cheeks, Kuba Jelenski is cold, wet, tired and hungry—but jubilant too. For Kuba is a 14-year-old schoolboy, and steering a tall ship through a storm is what he signed up for.

Kuba Jelenski, 14, one of 36 cadets on board.

Heeling to a stronger gust, the ship shoulders over a wave seven metres high. "Turn up and spill some wind," says Third Mate Mieczysław Lesniak. Bending his legs to the sway of the deck, Kuba pushes the wheel over.

There's a thunderclap, and the whole ship shudders. Looking up, Kuba can hardly believe his eyes. The red and green sailing lights on the masthead are dangling in space amid a mass of falling wires and spars.

The mast has broken. The *Fryderyk Chopin* and all on board are in dire peril.

Kuba and the 35 other children on board had competed with 650 applicants to make the four-month voyage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. Organized by the Class Afloat, based in Warsaw, Poland, the idea was to adventure under sail in the tall ship while continuing with the course work they would normally be doing in school.

The *Fryderyk Chopin* set sail with her young crew October 2010. They'd spent a week learning the ropes—literally—in the Polish port of Gdynia: all 198 ropes had to be found instantly, even in the pitch dark of an Atlantic night. By the end of it the children were scrambling up the masts like veteran sailors. "It's scary but exciting, and we all want to do it," said Kuba.

Ziemowit Baranski, the 76-year-old, white-bearded captain, knew just how they felt. At Kuba's age he'd longed to go to sea but such things were not possible under the political regime at the time. He became a chemistry teacher instead. When Poland liberalized, he returned to his boyhood dream, learned to sail and worked his way up to captain.

He helped build the *Fryderyk Chopin*, a 55.5-metre brig with a wood-panelled saloon, in 1990. Now she was on her eleventh Class Afloat voyage.

As they sailed through the Baltic, teachers shared deck duties while the

KINGA ŁOBODA

three mates and two bosuns—all unpaid volunteers—helped with the teaching. The captain, of course, told sea stories. With his calm blue eyes set in a sea of wrinkles, Baranski cut a storybook figure for the children. He was inspiring too: despite his age, he still scaled the masts himself.

"The aim of voyaging is to build self-esteem and confidence through a struggle with something bigger than yourself," he told the children. "This is not a training for going to sea but for living your life."

They stopped off at ports in Denmark, Norway. The storm struck two days after they had sailed out of Plymouth, in southeast England. Lessons became gruelling as the ship tossed and pitched, and they all battled with seasickness. They soothed their stomachs with instant jelly and custard, joking that it was better to eat something that tasted as good on the way up as it did on the way down.

Now the ship lurched westwards, 158 kilometres southwest of the Scilly Isles. Captain Baranski was not worried. The wind would soon shift, sending the ship south. Meanwhile, he might as well make things easier on the children. He clicked on his microphone. "No lessons today due to bad weather!" his voice boomed through the ship.

But then came the shout from the Third Mate. "The foremast has gone—broken!" The captain leapt for the deck. He knew straightaway that only one thing mattered: that the children should come out of this alive.

Kuba's mother was chilled by a question her son had asked before he sailed: "Mummy, what will you do if I die?"

Running up to the windswept bridge, he pointed at Kuba and his two lookouts. "Go below, right now," he ordered. "Tell the engineer to start the engine," he said to the Third Mate. First Mate Potempski appeared on deck with one arm still out of his jacket sleeve. "Send out an alert," Baranski told him.

"What shall I do?" asked Second Mate Maciej Ostrowski. "Keep the children out of harm's way," the captain said.

In the radio room, Potempski transmitted an automated distress alert by satellite to rescue centres and other ships all over Europe. He followed it with a plea for help. "Sailing vessel *Fryderyk Chopin* + broken foremast + immediate assistance necessary," he wrote. In the murky dawn light, Baranski and his mates took stock. The damage was appalling. The 10-metre bowsprit normally jutting proudly over the sea was twisted upwards and outwards. The steel foremast, 37 metres high and crossed by six

horizontal metres on which square sails could be set, was doubled over in two places, making an 'N' shape that swayed as the ship rolled. Every now and then it crashed into the ship's hull like a wrecking ball.

The top of the mast dangled upright from a wire called the top stay, its other end fixed to the mainmast. Baranski could see that the mainmast was holding everything up, and it wouldn't last much longer.

The dangers were chilling. If the mainmast was pulled down by the weight of the foremast, both could plunge into the deck. Torpedo-shaped spars up to nine metres long could spear through the deck, hitting anyone sheltering below. In addition, both the helm and the bridge, from where the captain controlled the ship, lay directly beneath the mainmast. So did the chart and radio rooms, protected only by thin metal roofs. He could send a man to the top of the mast to cut the top stay. This would take the strain off the mainmast. But Baranski dismissed the idea as tantamount to murder.

The bowsprit suddenly plummeted into the sea, dragging ropes and wires after it. The crew gasped.

There was a roar as the engine was fired up. Bosuns checked for wires trailing over the side of the ship. The engine went 'slow ahead' and the crippled ship had steerage way. As the ship rolled heavily, with no sails to steady it, the captain steered it across the wind so that falling rigging was more likely to drop into the sea.

Crowded into the small mess room below deck, squatting in the passageway and sprawling in bunks, Kuba and the other children listened to the noises above and tried to work out what was happening.

"Get your warmest clothes on and prepare to evacuate," a teacher told them. Some pushed their documents and a bar of chocolate into their inside pockets. "The captain will look after us," they said to one another, and this thought kept them calm. They hoped it wouldn't spell the end of their adventure, but started signing each other's white T-shirts as mementos, just in case. The five with guitars started to strum pop and sailor's songs. Shipmates and teachers joined in.

"There are no leaks, so we're not sinking," Second Mate Ostrowski reassured them. "There's no fire. The engine is running. We've nothing to worry about."

But the noise of the rigging smashing into the hull was ominous. A bang like a gunshot signalled a porthole being smashed. To Kuba it sounded as if the ship was being battered to bits.

The gale claimed the main mast, foremast and bowsprit; rigging threatened to foul the propeller.

On a headland in Falmouth, in England's Cornwall county, the Rescue Coordination Centre received the distress message from the *Fryderyk Chopin*. They immediately went into emergency mode, relaying the message to other ships in the area.

Fishing nearby, the trawler Bara An Aod hauled in her nets and headed for the scene at full speed. The *Nova Spero*, another fishing vessel, though nine hours away, did the same. The container ship *MSC Nerissa* interrupted her voyage from New York to Germany, and the Greek tanker *Overseas Andromar*, sailing from Charleston, USA, to Holland, altered course. Royal Air Force rescue helicopters circled the ship, then landed in the Scilly Isles, nearly 160 kilometres away, standing by as a last resort.

As news of the ship's plight spread, Poles living in Falmouth offered their help. Ships far from the scene offered assistance too. Listening to the radio news with her two younger children at home in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, near Warsaw, Kuba's mother, Beata, was chilled by the memory of a question her son had asked before he sailed: "Mummy, what will you do if I die?"

She rang her husband, Tomasz.

"The captain will do whatever he can to look after the children," she told him. "All we can do is trust him."

Suddenly, a mighty crash and screeching of metal. Men on deck braced themselves, expecting ship's gear and rigging to come crashing down on their heads. The upper third of the main mast had broken off and

was hanging perilously above the chart and radio rooms with its spars still attached.

With nothing to hold it up, the upper part of the foremast flopped down so that the masthead dragged in the sea. Wires, ropes and sails dangled everywhere. "Stop the engine!" ordered the captain, not wanting the wires to get tangled in the propeller.

Now the ship was dead—a drifting hulk.

Just then the bowsprit, which had been jutting out from the front of the ship at an angle, suddenly plummeted into the sea, dragging ropes and wires after it. The crew gasped.

One of the bosuns was a 29-year-old English teacher named Adam Kantorysimski. He knew the ship as well as Baranski because his own father had captained the vessel. He realized it was vital to secure the rigging. The job would be deadly dangerous, but the ship might be lost if it wasn't done.

Captain Baranski.

Reluctantly, the captain agreed to let him try.

Together with Third Mate Lesniak, Adam studied the web of tangled wires and made a plan. Cautiously, they climbed the foremast, then leaned out with a rope. As the wrecked rigging crashed against the mast, Adam saw his chance, leaned out with a rope and flicked it through the rungs of a ladder welded to the masthead. He lashed it down, and managed to stop it swaying outboard again. Ducking and diving through the lethal tangle, the two sailors successfully secured the mast. It took 18 ropes to do it.

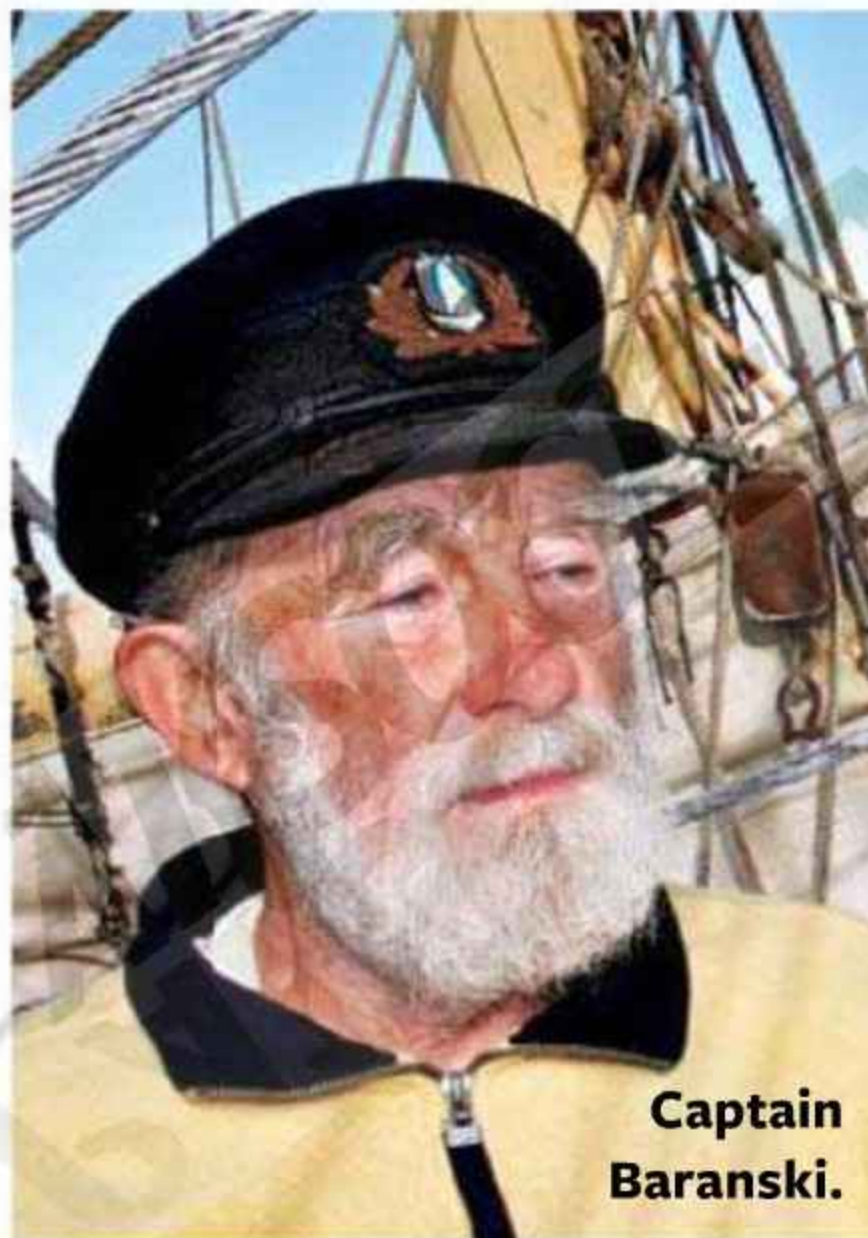
Next, Alex shinned up the gaff, a long steel pole hanging horizontally over the bridge and stern deck and looped extra ropes around it.

So, little by little, the ship was made safe. But it was still a long way from land.

Back on shore, the rescue authorities were insisting that the children must abandon ship. But Baranski refused. "The children are safest where they are," he radioed back, adamant.

Some of the boats responding to the mayday call were now nearing the ship. The tanker and container ship loomed on the horizon and took up positions to windward, trying to shelter the *Fryderyk Chopin* from the worst of the weather. But it wasn't until late afternoon that a boat suitable for towing the tall ship arrived.

It was the fishing vessel *Nova Spero*. Borrowing rope from the Greek tanker,

(THIS PAGE) JOHN DYSON; (OPPOSITE PAGE) TOM DYMOND/REX FEATURES

The children return after their ordeal.

its skipper Shaun Edwards carefully approached the *Fryderyk Chopin*'s wrecked bow, and threw a line. The Polish bosuns grabbed it, hauled the rope aboard and made it fast.

With dusk falling, the fishing boat turned for England and the *Fryderyk Chopin* obediently fell in line astern.

And so, after three more gruelling days of rolling through heavy seas, the *Fryderyk Chopin* finally arrived in Falmouth harbour, in Cornwall county on England's south-eastern tip. "Kuba dear, you are alive!" his mother Beata cried joyfully into his cellphone.

Well-wishers put hot Cornish pasties into the children's hands as they were ferried to a quay on shore. Their blue-water adventure was over.

But the lessons they had learnt—and the impact made on them by the captain and his brave crew—will remain with them for a very long time to come. "People say our captain is the best in Poland," said Kuba, "but I think he is the best in the world."

iDOGGY

After years in the hotel industry as a sales manager, my mother decided the stress and the information revolution called for her early retirement. One of the first things she did as a retiree was to get a tiny griffon puppy, aptly named Mini. Then she outfitted it with a fleece-lined jacket so it could brave our winters. "Now you've got a lapdog and you're dressing her up," I teased. "Mom, since you've retired, you've started acting like a little old woman." "I'd rather have a lapdog," she shot back, "than a laptop!"

Michael Sheaff

Top: Tony in his lab working on his week's invention. **Below:** some of his patents the mice haven't eaten. Yet.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TONY EDWARDS

Is this UK's most prolific and brilliant inventor? Tony Cuthbert's revolutionary ideas could transform our world. So why aren't they being put into practice?

BY TONY EDWARDS

Bladeless, cordless lawnmower anyone?

PATENT GENIUS

Last Monday, Tony Cuthbert woke up in his remote Welsh cottage with an idea. He opened his laptop and tapped out: "Hear is an inventoin for a new chuck deavice, using an aloy with a low liuqifactoin tempratur..."

Inventors normally guard their ideas and try to patent them before talking about them, but Tony, who's dyslexic, doesn't care who knows about Monday's little inspiration. "Having new ideas isn't a problem for me. I come up with a moderately interesting invention every day and a really good one about once a week." He says this without arrogance and with a touch of surprise, as if talking about someone else. "It may be something to do with my dyslexia, but I seem to think differently from other people."

At the age of 65, Tony can't remember how many bright technological ideas he's had, but he reckons it must run into "many thousands, most of which I've forgotten." Michael Laughton, professor of electrical engineering at

London University, who's spent the last 25 years scouring Britain for out-of-the-way inventors, says Cuthbert is unique. "Tony is the most prolific and gifted inventor I've come across. Given the right backing, he could surpass Edison's record of a thousand patents."

So how many Cuthbert patents are there? "I've no idea," says Tony. "The documents are somewhere in my workshop...assuming the mice and squirrels haven't eaten them." At our request, he agreed to count them—for the first time. There are 72. "There should be three times that many, but I must have lost some," he says with a shrug.

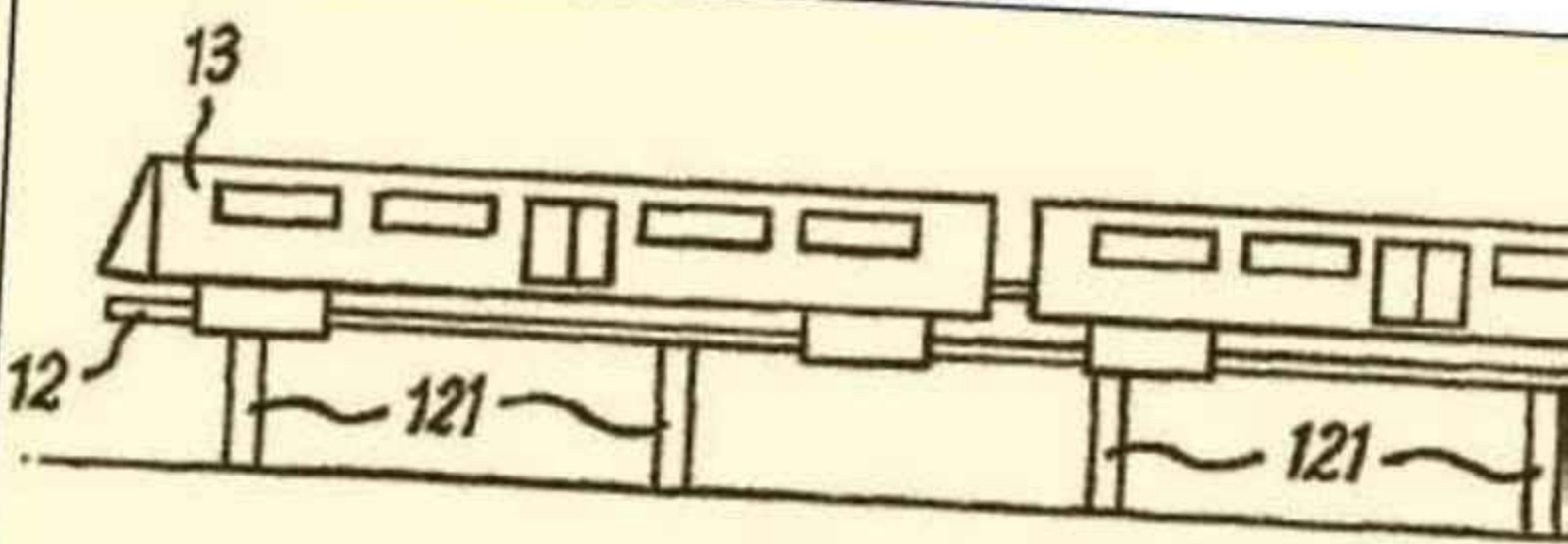
The rewards for technological creativity are notoriously fickle: Dyson's bagless vacuum cleaner has made its inventor James Dyson a multimillionaire, but the designer of a simple cardboard milk carton is worth billions. If there were any justice, Tony Cuthbert would now be in that league, too—for his Clutchless Gearbox alone. And then there's the Cuthbert Turbine, the Cuthbert Metal Separator, the Cuthbert Elevator, the Cuthbert Sub-Sea Salvage System... the list goes on.

And yet Tony lives hand to mouth, with just three dogs for company and a state pension his only income—the classic struggling lone inventor.

"One of Tony's problems is that some of his inventions are so revolutionary they can threaten existing technologies," says Professor Laughton. "That makes it difficult for him to convince the various industries he has tried to interest." Dyson had precisely this problem with his vacuum cleaners and finally had to manufacture the machines himself.

But Cuthbert is not in the entrepreneur mould. "I'm just an inventor," he says disarmingly. "Also, Dyson focused on a single invention, but I have so many different ideas, I can't concentrate on any one of them long enough."

At school, Cuthbert had been the classic classroom dunce. Profoundly

"Tony is the most prolific and gifted inventor I've come across."
MICHAEL LAUGHTON, PROFESSOR OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, LONDON UNIVERSITY.

Tony's maglev (magnetic levitation) train: "a fraction of the cost of current systems."

dyslexic, he was bottom of the class in everything apart from science. "More suited for manual labour than mental work," said his final report when he left his Liverpool school at 15. He began work as a garage mechanic, then joined the British Merchant Navy as an engine boy. After 18 months he had risen to chief electrical officer—at 19, the youngest in the fleet.

"As I had no qualifications, they had to apply for a dispensation to employ me in such a high-powered job," he says. "But I seemed to understand instinctively how things worked. Whenever there were any electrical problems on board, I knew how to fix them. That's how I got the job so young."

He stayed with the Merchant Navy for 20 years, until severe arthritis forced him into early retirement. He bought a tumbledown cottage in a tiny ravine in mid-Wales and set up his own consultancy. He quickly became famous as a local Mr Fixit. "If a firm has a technical problem, I can normally offer them two or three solutions within a couple of days—for almost any kind of technology," he says.

The word about Tony soon spread far beyond Wales—to no less than UK's Ministry of Defence, who have sometimes called upon him for advice. "They sit me in front of 50 or 60 high-powered scientists or engineers with PhDs and degrees, and say, 'Tony, we've got a problem, can you help?' One day it could be what they call 'novel power sources,' another day radars, or Chieftain Tanks. I've always been able to offer at least a couple of solutions."

Maybe a vertically and horizontally moving lift?

But Tony's not content with solving other people's problems. "I find my mind constantly bubbling over with ideas for new inventions," he says, "but not trivial things like a new corkscrew. I like to grapple with the big stuff."

Take the car engine. Small-time inventors are fond of engines—they have lots of little bits to improve on. But Cuthbert's not a tinkerer. "There have been only two basic engine designs—one by Otto and Benz, the other by Wankel—neither very efficient," he says, "so I decided to try and redesign the perfect engine from scratch."

It took him a few months to come up with a novel concept—an engine with just two moving parts (a typical car engine has over 100). The heart of it is a pair of wave-shaped discs that rotate when energized by a series of spark plugs. "It's a cross between a car engine and a turbine," he says, "and up to 100 times more powerful than either."

He first offered the design to Britain's Perkins Diesel Engine company, whose engineers were initially enthu-

siastic, but soon rang Tony with bad news. "They told me their finance people had ordered my engine to be dropped, as it would be 'detrimental' to their business," he says. "I guess it was a competitor to their existing products."

Cuthbert had a different reply from a major US aerospace contractor. "They said they didn't think the turbine would work," he says, "but I heard that one of their subsidiaries was investing thousands in developing it." Cuthbert handled the snub diplomatically. "I didn't get upset with them, but offered to help them build it—all I wanted was a few hundred pounds a month. But they refused. So I got a lawyer involved and they stopped work on it."

But another US company recently got hold of the Cuthbert Turbine idea and is now marketing it. Cuthbert just shrugs. "Oh, well, no matter; in the meantime, I've come up with a better concept—an engine with only one moving part," he says. "And in any case, I've got plenty more ideas."

Tony has got used to seeing others develop his ideas. Take his patents for an advanced power-steering system and a protective device for mobile-phone radiation. "I tried to interest manufacturers in these years ago. Now, someone else is doing them." But why isn't he making money? "I couldn't afford to keep up the patents," he replies.

In Britain, the intellectual property rules are quite inventor-friendly—at least initially, as it costs nothing to file a patent. But that dispensation lasts only a year, after which the fees are upwards of £10,000 to keep it going. That's why most inventors need to find investors, but that takes salesmanship.

"Lots of people think Tony's a mad professor, with ideas coming out of him in torrents," suggests Mike Glossop of Ferro-fluidics, a company Cuthbert has done work for. "I might use the same term myself, but as an endearment. He's both an old-fashioned experimental physicist and an extraordinary lateral thinker."

Indeed, Tony is no amateur. While his own cottage is spartan to the point of eccentricity, he appears to have spent every penny on his workshop—an Aladdin's cave of spectrum analyzers, frequency counters, oscilloscopes, strain gauges, suspension wires, strange liquids, magnets, bicycle wheels and metal sheets and rods. "I've used them all in thousands of experiments," he says.

It was while "playing around with" magnets and aluminium strips that Tony came up with an invention for skyscrapers: his Cableless Elevator. His idea was that the lift car would

SOME OF TONY'S MIND-BOGGLING INVENTIONS

- An **engine** with only one moving part.
- A **protective device** for mobile-phone radiation.
- A **leak-proof,** deep-sea electrical connector.
- An **advanced power-steering** system.
- A **propulsion system** that could get you to Mars in just a few hours.
- A **cableless elevator** that could revolutionize how skyscrapers are built.

float in free space, held aloft by magnetic repulsion against the metal walls of the shaft. A magnetic motor drives the lift up and down. "It could revolutionize the way skyscrapers are built," says Dr Gina Barney, a UK expert who's examined a working model. "Its ability to go horizontally and vertically is sensational."

But are any manufacturers interested? "Well, yes and no," says Cuthbert. "Two major lift companies thought it amazing, but said they'd already invested heavily in a different but less-elegant system and it would be 'difficult' to change."

The idea doesn't end with lifts. "In principle, the concept could be used to convert the rail network to high-speed magnetic levitation, or maglev, trains," says Cuthbert, "at a fraction of the cost of current maglev systems."

So, is he working on it ? "No," he says excitedly, "because I've come up with a propulsion system that's better even than maglev. Watch this." He presses a button and two coin-sized discs are flung forward, causing a metal plate to shift position. "It doesn't look much," he says, "but this is a real breakthrough. It appears to break Newton's Third Law of Motion, but it doesn't; it just modifies it. With that, you can float off the ground, travel anywhere—even get to Mars in a few hours."

But for the moment, Tony's sights are set on a couple of more earthbound ideas: a leak-proof, deep-sea electrical connector and a bladeless, cordless lawnmower. "The technologies are already out there," he says, "but no one's put the concepts together before."

How did the US philosopher William James define genius? "The faculty of perceiving in an unhabitual way." Just like Tony.

KIDSPEAK

My husband and I were visiting our daughter and son-in-law, who have a two-year-old child, Peter. Our room was next to his.

At 3am we woke to Peter's screams, then heard our daughter gently assuring him there were no wild animals in his room or outside the window. Eventually all was quiet, but at 5am the same thing happened.

At breakfast, we learnt he'd never done this before. After lunch, It was time for Peter's nap and my husband decided to have one, too.

Within minutes my husband was asleep and began to snore, at which point Peter shrieked from upstairs: "There they are! They're back again!"

Grace Robertson

In their scripture lesson the children had to write about God-given gifts. This is one answer.

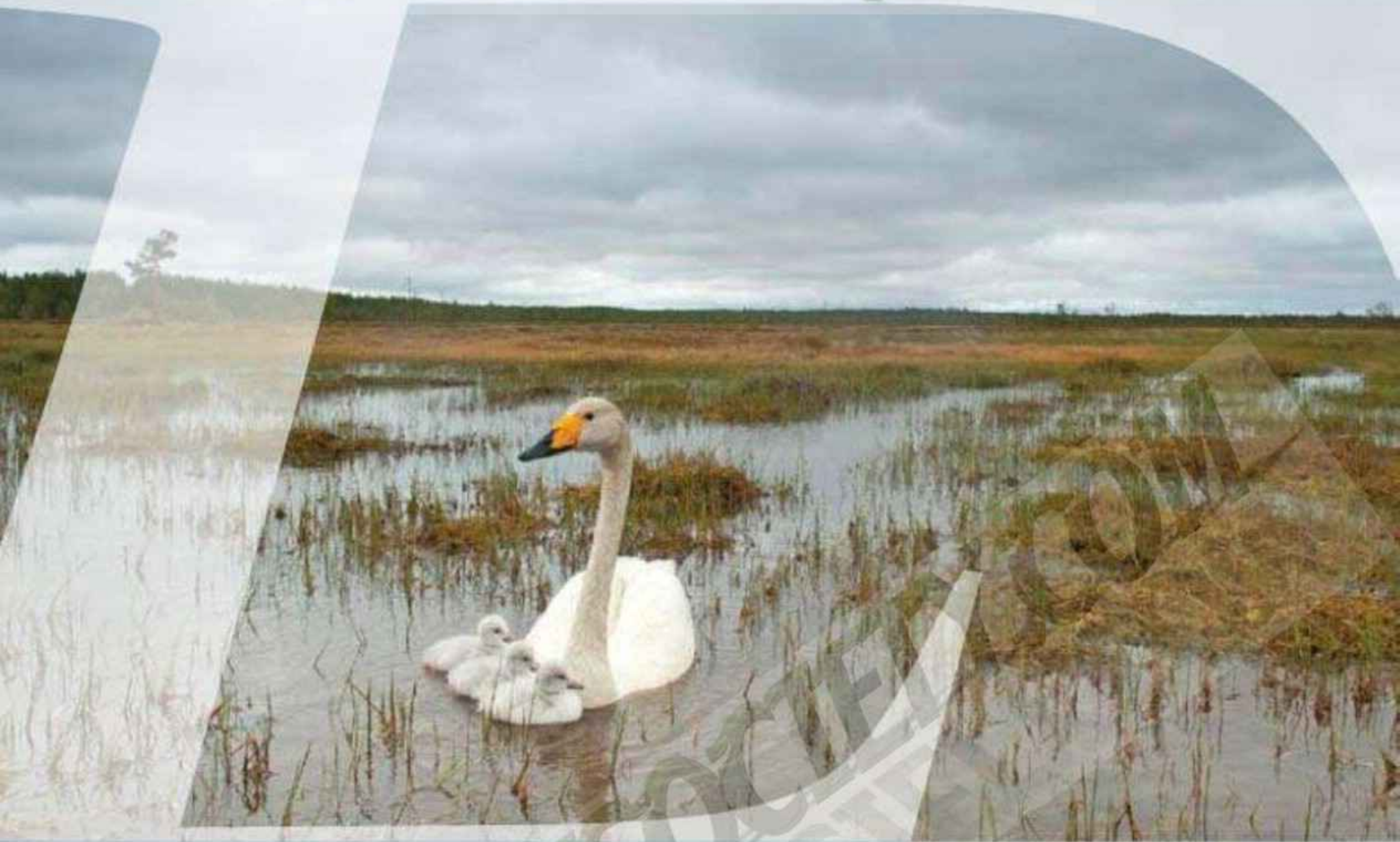
"God gives us a present of teeth twice. The third time we have to pay for them."

Rita Paulics

Swan Serenade

With its 2.4-metre wingspan, the whooper is a jumbo jet in the avian fleet of waterfowl. By turns angelic in flight, flashy in a display of triumph, and stately in tucked-in repose, it is elegance on the wing—a bird to inspire flights of fancy

PHOTOS BY STEFANO UNTERTHINER. TEXT BY CATHY NEWMAN

FROM *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC*

From the swirl of its initial letter to its sighing vowel and feather-soft final consonant, the very word —"swan"—suggests grace. Peter llich Tchaikovsky did not, after all, write "Duck Pond." The whooper swan, like its onomatopoeic cousins, the whistling and the trumpeter, belongs to an elegant society of sisters; the mute, Bewick's, black, and black-necked fill out the ranks. First described by Carl Linnaeus in 1758, *Cygnus cygnus* can be considered a swan among swans, the type species, hence archetype, of all swans. It is also a swan of superlatives. With a population of about 180,000, the whooper, though vulnerable to loss of habitat, is among the most abundant of swans and trumps others in the sweep of its range.

To the ancients, the appearance of a swan, with its effortless glide on the mirror of a lake and lovely, unfurling flight, signalled evanescence and evoked immortal longings. Hindu mythology has revered the *hamsa* (see box, page 104). Socrates, his student Plato tells us, heard the song of a swan on the day of his death. In Norse mythology, the Valkyries, celestial maidens who chose martyrs on battlefields, came in the guise of swans and bore their fallen heroes to Valhalla, a Nordic paradise. Pythagoras

Left: **A parent swan in the Kainuu region at the eastern edge of Finland shepherds its cygnets, which hatch in June.**

Below: **Within a few days they venture from the nest to forage for aquatic plants and insects. They join their parents for autumn migration and stay with them during their first winter.**

MAP: BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

believed the souls of poets passed into swans, a fitting entombment that turns the clichéd phrase "poetry in motion" into a truly lyrical metaphor.

The swan, Russian poet Anna Akhmatova writes, "floats through the centuries" and into the turning wheel of seasons. Swans on their

ETERNAL HAMSA

You'd be extremely lucky to spot a swan in the wild here. There really aren't any, unless it's an odd "vagrant" that strayed far from a migrating flock, like the handful spotted on the subcontinent in the past century, most of them in what is now Pakistan. Yet, swans adorn Hindu mythology and are compared to saintly persons. In Vedic literature, the few who attain great spiritual capabilities are often called *Paramahamsa*—"Great Swan." The Sanskrit word for swan is *hamsa* and it is the *vahan*, or vehicle, of goddess Saraswati. There may have been swans in our northern regions in ancient times. Or it could simply be that rare, vagrant swans were so prized, they featured so much in our lore.

An iconic Ravi Varma painting done in 1899 (detail, *above*) depicts princess Damayanti with the hamsa in a scene from the *Mahabharata*. Varma might have used foreign references to paint his rather plump swan. *M.S.*

COURTESY OF SRI CHITRA ART GALLERY, TRIVANDRUM

autumnal migratory flight—the celestial flutter of wings, the silver arrow of a flock splitting the sky—evoke poetic melancholy. Shadows lengthen. Days shorten. Another year closes in. Still, there is the reassuring uplift of fairy tales like Hans Christian Andersen's duckling turned swan, with its metamorphosis from plain to princely.

Bittersweet, these beautiful birds. Yet their loveliness masks the toll exacted by the gravitational pull of their large bodies and the strain of daily survival. Laboured take-offs, the frantic paddling of webbed feet and heavy beating of wings before their soaring ascent, a territorial aggressiveness directed at other swans and waterfowl that can turn vicious and, occasionally, deadly, suggest that beauty does not come as easily or kindly as we might wish. ■

Not only are whoopers occasionally high fliers—a flock was once spotted by a pilot at 26,900 feet [8200 metres]—but their migratory flights can be phenomenal. One route, the 1300km-long flight from Iceland to Ireland, is probably the longest sea crossing by any swan species.

The Fear Factor: TASTING SAFARI

When it comes to eating, there are some dishes that induce fear in the hearts of the unadventurous. And it's not just about flavour—it's also about anticipation. Lucy Corne tells of an eat fest to remember

PHOTOGRAPHY SHAWN PARKER

CHEONGGUKJANG
Chilli and fermented soybeans
Fearometer ✓

It began as a typical tipsy conversation that many foreigners living abroad have had—a theoretical safari of the markets in Seoul, South Korea, in search of the city's most fearsome food. How it ended up as an actual day trip I don't exactly recall, but somehow I found myself trying to match the Korean appetite for unusual eats in a 12-hour session of escalating food dares.

THE STARTERS

We'd started with the soup course, cheonggukjang to be precise—a hearty blend of chilli and fermented soybeans renowned for its stomach-churning smell. Urban legend bestowed the name "Dead Body Soup" on this pungent plate when Korean students preparing the soup abroad were allegedly questioned by police regarding a rotting corpse. I was not hopeful for a tasty start to the day. I don't make a habit of sniffing corpses and I disagreed with online descriptions likening the soup to certain bodily functions—to me it smelt like blue cheese kept in an old gym sock. Yet, to my surprise, once I started eating, I liked it!

We moved from something that supposedly smelt like a corpse to something that's part of a corpse—an animal corpse that is. Sold on every street corner, sundae earns a mere 'uneasy' on the fearometer. You might think it odd to jump from soup to dessert, but this is no sweetmeat. Let me introduce the most disappointingly named dish ever. Shake off thoughts of ice cream and cherries in favour of this: a sausage of terrifying propor-

SUNDAE
Blood sausage with noodles
Fearometer ✓✓✓✓

tions in hues of food's least appealing shade—charcoal grey. Sundae in Seoul is a blood sausage crammed with noodles that have first-time tasters half suspecting they might be munching on deceased maggots. Served warm and dipped in spicy sauce, it's a palatable nibble, but choose the wrong vendor and you'll find yourself washing down unchewed chunks of lukewarm blood, praising the beer in your hand with every hard swallow.

DAK DONG JIP
Chicken anus with chillies, onions
Fearometer ✓✓

THE MEATS

Undeterred, I prepared myself for the third course—chicken feet. Even without considering the substance chickens spend much of their time standing in, I still have issues with chicken feet. Just how are you supposed to eat a chicken foot? Do you shove them in whole and chomp through the bones, or nibble delicately on the rubbery skin? I decided that embarrassing myself by crunching through cartilage unnecessarily was better than offending my host, so I took the plunge and bit off a toe. A generous douse of chilli can make virtually anything edible, but boiling a chicken foot does nothing for its texture and I was thrilled I'd recently learnt the Korean way to say "Parcel it, I want a takeaway."

As unappealing as blood and toes on a lunch plate were, neither approaches terrifying. We needed a dish that would instil panic and despair. It was time to chew on what must be the least appetizing part of any

animal, namely dak dong jip, which translates almost poetically (if the poet was a nine-year-old with a lavatorial humour fixation) as "chicken poop house."

My first thought as we were served a platter of chicken anus, mercifully fried with chillies and onions, was that they were larger than I'd imagined. Not that I go around imagining that kind of thing, but once I learnt it was on our menu, I did wonder. The flavour was

perfectly inoffensive but fear factor food is not just about flavour—it's also about anticipation and mine was nervous enough that I had to choke down the first bite with a beer. Soon my mind stopped rebelling and despite the texture—a weird chewy-crunchy hybrid, like a chunk of celery wrapped in some overcooked squid—we actually finished the plate.

With everything but the beak seemingly sampled, I was forced to move from parts of animals I don't generally eat to animals I don't generally eat. South Korea has a penchant for unusual meat—from the controversial practice of dog for dinner to occasional restaurants serving horse or turtle. Leaving four-legged friends for another day, I braced myself for the insect course. Low in fat and high in protein, beondegi (silkworm larvae), are sold from carts throughout Seoul; the easiest way to locate one—follow your nose. The pungent stench these steamed grubs give off is difficult to describe: a bitter, dungy, molten plastic-like aroma that you'd never associate with food.

Luckily, they don't taste nearly as bad as they smell. Granted they soak up the fetid juices they've been simmered in leaving a flavour more reminiscent of dak dong jip than anything eaten at the chicken restaurant, but compared to the aroma they exude, these grubs are practically gourmet.

THE SEAFOOD

Our final stop was the fear factor HQ: Noryangjin Fish Market, a warehouse-

SEOUL FOOD

More unusual delicacies for the adventurous foodie

GGUP DAE GI Fancy some pig skin? That's what you're getting when you order this dish. You can have it grilled or cooked in hot sauce.

BOSIN-TANG This soup may be considered controversial because its main ingredient is dog meat. However, it is considered a healthy dish in Korea.

KAN-JANG-KAE-JANG This is fermented raw crab that's been marinated either in a chilli or soy sauce.

GOPCHANG Koreans love this dish—grilled pig or cattle intestines mixed with vegetables, red peppers and spices—for its juiciness and chewy texture.

like space brimming with seafood both dead and alive, including some mystery creatures that wouldn't be out of place in a sci-fi movie, but we'd come for one thing—to nibble on live octopus. OK, so sannakji isn't really still alive when served but it is still wriggling! We bought the feistiest specimen we could find, handing it to a nearby restaurant to chop and serve, still writhing, to our table.

In many ways sannakji is the ultimate fear factor food, not least because rumours abound that people have died while eating it, choking on hardy tentacles determined to fight back. Of course, first you have to get them into your mouth—chopsticks and fidgeting food are not an ideal mix. Following advice, we doused each wriggling piece in sesame oil—thought to diminish suction powers—and chewed enough to make any etiquette coach proud. My deep misgivings and nervous excitement were met with a disappointing realization—sannakji is actually quite tasty. And there was something disturbingly pleasant about feeling food wriggle around in your mouth...

SANNAKJI Live octopus
Fearometer ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

THE FINAL CHALLENGE

Just as we were leaving, we stumbled on one final challenge—a dish whose reputation dwarfs all other weird eats in Seoul; one that even most South Koreans admit to avoiding. Looking at the fish in question, you get the idea they're not supposed to be eaten. Hongeo, or the large, flat sea fish known in English as skate, resemble rays (another fish) and their winged, seemingly grinning bodies don't look like something you should be consuming. That's before you take into account their immense ammonia content. Unless eaten quickly, their chemical-soaked flesh rapidly rots; yet Koreans—kings of daredevil delicacies—ferment the fish and serve it raw.

I was finally feeling the fear. Occasional wafts of ammonia filled my stomach with butterflies the like of which I'd normally associate with a long-awaited dentist visit. At a nearby restaurant, the fish was served alongside a plethora of pungent side dishes presumably meant to mask the taste. Knowing it was an atrocious idea, I raised a slice to my nose and inhaled deeply. This was followed by a coughing fit and the inevitable "car crash" moment—taking a second inhalation of the aroma just to make

HONGEO Fermented raw fish
Fearometer ✓ ✓ ✓

sure it was still hideous. Tasting time provided something of a coup—unable to chew through the cartilage-filled flesh, I experienced my first retch of the day and in the absence of any napkins, spat a half-chewed chunk of bones into my hand.

Determined not to be defeated, I snipped the bone from a second slice, wrapped it in all-masking kimchi—the traditional fermented Korean dish made of vegetables with varied seasonings—and tried again. The aroma seemed to singe my nose hairs and though I managed to swallow I knew that however brave I considered myself, I'd never have the culinary courage of a Korean. I've never chewed on a bandage or nibbled on a sponge after cleaning the kitchen with it, but I imagine that both would resemble the "shouldn't be eaten" flavour of hongeo—a throat-numbing dose of ammonia savoured by hardcore ajoshi and ajumma (senior Korean men and women).

Hongeo might not be to my taste but you have to take your hat off to someone who would eat it for anything other than a dare. And that's the biggest takeaway of my Fear Factor Tasting Safari. I've learnt to acknowledge that I have very set preconceived ideas of what's edibly acceptable and what's not. Anything that falls outside these ideas will send me into fear factor territory.

Here, a world away from my United Kingdom home, I have been made to step beyond my comfort zone to eat ingredients deemed inedible elsewhere—be they unusual creatures, overlooked organs or weird and wonderful plant life.

While the less adventurous settled down to their meat and two vegetables, Koreans are at the cutting edge of the culinary arena, serving up a feast of sea squirts and deer antler tea, alongside plates of kimchi, rice and deliciously spicy soups.

The fear factor is hiding around every corner of the Korean kitchen, but if there's a choice between the peculiar and the predictable; the mysterious and the mundane, I'll fill my bowl with chicken feet and wriggling tentacles every time. This is fearlessness defined. ■

HOW TO FEEL RICH

BY LENORE SKENAZY

Wealth need not require cash. Learn from these 24 people who discovered surprising riches in memorable "aha!" moments

Have you ever had an "Oh! Now I understand it!" moment? That wonderful mind-opening instance when something happens that zooms you up to the sky and gives you a God's-eye view of your life and you realize how incredibly well off you are? For that moment, anyway, you are richer than Bill Gates!

For some, it happens at the birth of a child (no big surprise there). For others, it's when they get their first home after sleeping on their parents' couch for eight years. For US saleswoman Hali Chambers, it happened when a blizzard knocked out her electricity for five days in the winter of 2010.

"I live way out in the country, so I couldn't even get out if I wanted to," she recalls. "It was then that I really mastered my wood stove. I was so grateful for it! I was sitting with a cup of hot tea and a pot of lentils bubbling on the burner. It was completely silent—no hum of electronics. My dogs were snoozing by my feet, and I felt completely rich."

ILLUSTRATED BY SHOUT

Note, please, that for this particular woman, the day she felt superwealthy was not the day she got a job or won the lottery. It was the day she lost her electrical power and had a revelation: She was one with the world and no longer required iPods, iPads, or any other iThingies to thrive.

Hali Chambers kept it simple.

With the economy acting like a cat on a leash—come on! come on—it's great to know that even the simplest event can make people feel as if they're swimming in riches.

Wow! This Is Mine?

And nothing is simpler than falling into unexpected bounty. Melinda Ballengee, 34, of New Jersey, USA, was at a discount store, "digging through piles and piles of crap," as she recalls, when she noticed a dress had fallen to the floor. "Because I'm polite and I worked in retail when I was a student, I put it on a hanger."

Good girl. Because when she performed her good deed, she saw what she had there: a $450 designer dress. Exactly her size. Exactly her style. And exactly her budget. Squeals Ballengee, "It was on sale for $12!"

Which is not to say that bargains are the secret to feeling incredibly rich.

Scratch that. Of course bargains are the secret to feeling incredibly rich! And happy! And smart! But there are other ways, too, including ...

Losing It All

As Canadian singer Joni Mitchell sang, "You don't know what you got till it's gone." School teachers Bonnie Caul and Gary Silver would have to agree. They were staring at what had been their suburban home—but was now a charred skeleton—when a driver stopped by. He rolled down his window and handed Silver a $50 bill. "My house once burned down too," said the stranger. And off he drove.

That moment, the couple felt inexplicably buoyant. Giddy. Rich. "I just couldn't believe that someone could be so thoughtful," recalls Caul. They had lost pretty much everything, yes, but in that instant found what they really had: a network of friends they knew—and didn't know—ready to pitch in. That sense of community can make you feel richer than anything because it means you're not facing life's mood swings alone.

Air Force Major Dean Tow was stationed in Saudi Arabia in 1993 when his wife called from the US to say their landlord wasn't renewing their lease. Tow couldn't get home in time for the move, so he called a fellow officer back home. "I expected her to just offer advice or moral support, but she mobilized her entire office," says Tow. "They moved us lock, stock, and barrel from our old place to our new one in about two hours. My spouse provided food and drinks to the 'crew,' and what started out as a nightmare concluded with a happy ending."

(THIS PAGE) COURTESY HALI CHAMBERS; COURTESY CLIFFORD LEE JOHNSON III

Close Calls

Haley Haines's happy ending had a truly horrific beginning. It happened on her last day at a piney sleepaway camp a few years back, when she was 12. All the other kids had been picked up already, and she was waiting for her mom and brother to come and get her. The shadows were getting longer and longer when a counsellor finally got a call: Haley's mom and brother were in the hospital. They had been in a serious car crash, with a fatality in the car that hit them. The counsellor was instructed to calm the girl, then tell her that her dad was coming.

Dean Tow relied on friends.

It took him six hours to get to his daughter. Together they drove to the hospital, and when they got there, "I just burst into tears," says Haley. But these weren't just tears of sorrow. "Seeing the tubes attached to my mom and my brother—it made me realize how fortunate I was." She had come so close to losing them—but hadn't. "That's when I felt rich."

Now Haley is in high school. Her mother and brother have both recovered. But tucked into her memory she will always have that picture of them in their hospital beds. And she can never feel ungrateful again.

Living Without

If Haley Haines felt richest when she almost lost what she valued most, Silvana Clark felt richest when she did lose everything—voluntarily. She and her husband got rid of their house and moved into a 240-square-foot trailer. Their chosen vocation: to travel around the country delivering donated shoes to shelters.

"We cooked in a tiny trailer kitchen and washed dishes in a small sink," says Clark. "We drove to battered-women's shelters, homes for abused children, and homeless missions." Seeing people in such desperate situations made Clark realize just how well off she was. "I felt richer than Oprah!" she says. "I had a loving husband, a clean warm bed, and a safe environment." She no longer took the basics for granted. And she had enough things—material and ethereal—to be grateful for.

And Speaking of Gratitude ...

Sometimes it's the gratitude of others that gives us that golden feeling—and that doubles when the grateful ones are our kids. Ask Cat Mosley.

The publicist and her eight-year-old son were going through some tough family times just this past Christmas when his babysitter gave him a present: $25. The boy actually loves to shop, says Mosley, but that's not what he did with the money. No, "he handed it to me and said, 'Mom, this is for you because you have been a good girl.' "

I felt rich when...

We asked our readers to tell us about the day they felt the richest. Turns out, we have more wealthy readers than *Forbes.*

"Resuscitating an asphyxiated newborn baby made me feel great and there was such a sense of achievement."

Kanna Sandhyarani, Medical officer

"Two weeks after my kitten died in an accident, a beautiful long-haired black kitten showed up on my porch.." *Bea Whetsel*

"When I found a doctor who believed me."

Anonymous

"The day my mother was declared cancer-free. We took her to a Gipsy Kings concert that night, and I watched her dance the night away."

Chanda Ghandi, on Facebook

"When I visited my mom and felt like a little girl again."

Anonymous

"The day my dad said he was proud of me for the first time in 20 years. It made me cry."

Ralph Pernites, on Facebook

"The day my Marine son came back from Iraq and then again from Afghanistan."

Bill Carrigan

"As a student, I felt rich when I had a full tank of petrol and $20 in my wallet." *Zan Jones*

"When I went skydiving and conquered my fear of heights."

Gresham Harkless

"The day some of my students tested much higher than they ever had."

Patricia Taylor,

"Having tea with my friend Starr and talking about plants and cats and whatever."

Gale Green

"When my aunt disclosed that she'd saved a paper boat I'd made, coloured and presented to her as a child." *Ashna Banga,* on Facebook

"Winning $700 in Vegas had me feeling rich and happy. So did the free drinks. Maybe they were a big part of it."

Matt McGovern

"The day I let a friend and her daughter move in with me. They had no place to go or money to find one."

Robin Kalmback

"I feel richest today! Today is the only day I have. The past is gone, and there is no guarantee of tomorrow."

Angil Tarach Ritchey

"Clearing an exam I was expecting to fail."

Sandarbh Awasthi, on Facebook

Mosley's heart went to the moon. And the money? She spent that on something really special.

"Him!"

Giving and getting really are the same thing.

Hemu Joshi earned good luck.

A Blessing

Accounting trainer Hemu Joshi of Dwarka, Delhi, was in a bus to Gurgaon for a job interview one morning in April 2007. Having already given several interviews without luck, Joshi was hopeful about this one. On the bus, an elderly lady seated next to him told him she was going to meet relatives and repeatedly enquired about her stop arriving. Joshi assured her that he'd help her alight when they reached her destination.

"She said she was visiting relatives," recalls Joshi. "I couldn't help wondering, *What kind of relatives would expect a woman as old and feeble as her to come alone by bus?* So I offered to drop her to their home."

They alighted long before Joshi's stop and hired an autorickshaw. Reaching the house she was visiting, Joshi realized that the lady's relatives were themselves an aged couple. As he left, the lady held Joshi's hand. "Thank you, son," she said, "may the task you had set out to do today be fulfilled." Already late for his interview, Joshi hurried away.

Questioned about being late for his interview, Joshi explained that he'd been helping somebody he met on the bus. Following several discussions that day, a jubilant Joshi left for home with a job offer in hand, and feeling rich for more than one reason.

"I recalled the nice old lady's words and said a little prayer of thanks," he says. Today, five years on, Hemu Joshi has moved up to manager at his workplace.

A Gift

Now, if you're lucky, the whole giving-and-getting thing comes with a real-world cherry on top. Something substantive. It did for Nicholas Powell, 14, of New York City. "My friends and I were playing on the street, and there was an old man carrying grocery bags. We asked him if he needed help, and he said no, but we decided to help and walked over to his house."

And then, says Nicholas, "he went inside and brought down a football for us. He said he didn't need it anymore. And he told us we were going to go somewhere in life if we kept that attitude."

That attitude of helpfulness, he meant. That attitude of reaching out.

There's every reason to believe that those boys will indeed keep it up. Because at that moment, Nicholas, at least, felt richer than anyone.

And smiling at him was an elderly man who no doubt felt the same. ■

COURTESY HEMU JOSHI

"A BLESSING" REPORTED BY AARTI NARANG

Perfect

A solar flare erupts on 8 September 2010, hurling a coronal mass ejection (CME) into space. On this occasion Earth was spared.

Scientists warn of a coming cosmic hurricane that could penetrate the Earth's magnetic shield and disrupt power grids, communication, aircraft and GPS-based devices

storm

BY JOHN DYSON

An arc of super-hot plasma rises out of the sun. Abruptly it snaps, shooting billions of tonnes of gas into the solar system.

Observing through special cameras on satellites far out in space, solar scientists see the glowing plasma streak through space at 2000km a second—and heading our way.

Only when it passes a satellite, 1.5 million kilometres above the Earth, will they know how dangerous it is. "From that moment," says astrophysicist Professor Mike Hapgood, one of Europe's leading space scientists, "we'll have about 40 minutes to prepare."

A solar superstorm—technically known as a coronal mass ejection, or CME—is the most violent of the solar phenomena collectively termed "space weather." According to Hapgood, 59, former chair of Europe's Space Weather Working Team, a CME will not damage life on Earth, or change our climate. It won't even blow our hats off.

But it nevertheless poses a serious threat to the way we live, because at the heart of a CME are vibrating magnetic forces that generate huge surges of electricity. These can invade power lines, burning out vital transformers that could take months, if not years,

to replace. For any place to have its power grid knocked out could be devastating.

And all thinking is not alarmist. NASA's twin STEREO satellites, launched in 2006 to watch the sun, have recorded more than 200 big CMEs so far. None of those that brushed the magnetic shield protecting Earth's ionosphere was big enough to do any damage, but Hapgood believes it's only a matter of time. "We don't know if a big CME will come next week or next year, but a big hit is inevitable," he warns. "And we'd better be ready."

Indeed, two big CMEs did come close to Earth on 29 April and 1 August in 2010. Four more hit in the next few days and auroras—the glowing pink, green and purple curtains known as northern lights, a product of solar weather—were seen as far south as Copenhagen. One of the most powerful CMEs for years erupted on 9 November but luckily shot off in another direction.

The most violent superstorm ever measured hit the Earth in 1859. Life did not come to a standstill anywhere on the planet—damage was limited to melted wires and fires in telegraph networks—but this is because it happened before we came to depend on electricity.

Smaller CMEs in 1921, 1989 and 2003 caused much greater damage, cutting power to entire regions as well as hitting telephones, railways, aircraft and satellites. "If 1859 happened again today, power failures would be widespread, especially in mid-latitude countries such as Poland, France and Germany," says Hapgood. With today's interconnected power supplies across countries, the risks can be enormous.

Space weather happens all the time and is seldom noticed. Only occasionally does it break through the protective shield that extends around the Earth, called the magnetosphere. One effect is to decorate polar skies with colourful auroras. But other effects are more sinister (see box).

Solar winds are big threats to the GPS systems on which we depend more and more. A rig drilling an undersea well, for example, could lose connection with a hole as a result of GPS failure and trigger a blow-out. Much worse, cellphone networks and worldwide financial markets relying on split-second time signals provided by GPS could collapse.

In addition, spikes in cosmic radiation can hit aircraft and passengers with the equivalent of about 50 chest X-rays. They are believed to have sent a Qantas Airbus flying from Singapore to Perth in October 2008 into two sudden dives, flinging people around the cabin and injuring 39, twelve of them seriously.

A major CME has the potential to wreak the most havoc and many scientists believe we are approaching a period of maximum risk. The reason has to do with the solar cycle—variations in the sun's output, which is influenced by the number and position of 'spots' on the sun.

Two main cycles affect the sun: a large, slow one, which bottomed out in the mid-1600s and climbed to a peak around 1985; and a much shorter cycle of 11 years.

"We've just had the longest and deepest solar minimum for nearly 100 years, during which key technologies such as GPS have been widely adopted," says Hapgood. "Now activity is picking up again. More and more sunspots are now appearing and the honeymoon is over. What will happen at the peak of the 11-year cycle in 2012-13 is a guessing game."

When the solar superstorm hit in 1859, the phases of the two sun cycles were similar to how they will be in the next few years. "The more I find out about the science," says Hapgood, "the more scared I get."

Hapgood is not the only solar scientist concerned about a superstorm. A NASA report in 2008 warned that a severe CME would be a "cosmic Katrina," causing damage that would take

Storms in space

Space batters the planet with the cosmic equivalent of clouds, winds and hurricanes.

Solar flares Spectacular explosions caused by the release of magnetic energy on the sun's surface—some with the energy equivalent of 100 million H-bombs. Can interrupt the high-frequency radio communications used by airlines and the military.

Solar radio bursts Squalls of high-energy electrons spurted out of the sun interfere with devices that depend on radio signals, such as global navigation satellite systems and radars.

Solar radiation storms Blasts of radiation penetrating Earth's protective barriers disrupt digital systems in space and aircraft, exposing astronauts and passengers to the equivalent of dozens of X-rays.

Solar wind Energised particles pouring out of the sun at high speeds. Those reaching the ionosphere create the aurora borealis, or northern lights (*pictured above*).

Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) The "hurricane" of solar winds, this is a cloud of million-degree Celsius gas that bursts out of the sun. The powerful magnetic fields at its core send electrical surges through the Earth's surface and into electrical networks.

years to repair. Another report, by an American company specializing in power grids, advised that a repeat of the 1859 storm would melt 380 transformers in the US and black out one-third of North America for many months.

Dr William Radasky, an author of this report, points out that no such assessment has yet been made elsewhere. Nobody has any real understanding of what could hit them, nor has anybody taken advantage of new technical breakthroughs that could help protect them.

The truth is that the impacts of a big solar storm are unknown. Take Europe, for instance, with its 305,000km of high-voltage overhead transmission lines delivering power to 525 million people in 34 countries. The power grid's dense network of interconnected systems, mostly function as one.

The big danger is that failure of one part of the system can lead to a cascade of failures over a wider area. This occurred in 2006 when high-voltage cables over the river Ems in Germany were shut down to let a

Electric shocks

The damage done has grown along with our dependence on electricity

The Superstorm, 28 August 1859 The most powerful CME yet recorded. Northern lights appearing as far south as Sicily and Cuba were so vivid that many thought their cities had caught fire. In North America and Europe, telegraph wires melted and telegraph offices went up in flames.

The New York Railroad Storm, 13 May 1921 Trains came to a standstill as the signal and switching system was in part put out of operation.

The Quebec Blackout Storm, 13 March 1989 As a spectacular northern lights display was seen around the world, the power grid in Quebec, Canada, collapsed, leaving six million people without power on a freezing winter night. The ASEOS-II spacecraft was knocked out and two transformers were damaged in the UK.

The Halloween Storm, 29 October 2003 In Malmö, Sweden, 50,000 people lost power. Dozens of satellites were incapacitated, as was a spacecraft on its way to Mars. Air-traffic control around the world lost the ability to detect height differences between aircraft for 30 hours. South Africa's power grid was crippled—proving that it isn't only high-latitude countries that are vulnerable.

cruise ship pass beneath them. Power failures rippled as far as Portugal, blacking out 15 million homes in five countries. A severe space-weather event could be much worse.

Only one country in the European Union (EU) has taken systematic steps to protect itself against a devastating CME, and even this happened by accident. Renewing its grid in the 1960s, Finland installed capacitors to boost performance and extra-strong transformers as proof against lightning. "We made a lucky decision, because these turn out to be the very things needed to make grids robust," says Jarmo Elovaara, a professor and engineer for Fingrid, the national grid operator.

To do the same elsewhere would be costly but not difficult. "If transformers everywhere were the same as ours there'd be much less risk of problems," says Dr Risto Pirjola, head of Finland's space weather research. "But perhaps we have to wait for something to happen before grid operators spend the money."

Hopefully it won't take a superstorm to make this happen. The high-level threats of space weather are starting to appear on Europe's radar. The EU is funding research projects such as EURISGIC, which aims to quantify and map the statistical risks of CME-induced currents in grids. Engineers are also developing worst-case scenarios to determine how big the impacts could be and whether enough is being done to make grids and transformers survivable.

In addition, the European Space Agency has launched a pilot Space Situational Awareness program, while warning centres in Lund, Prague, Warsaw and Brussels monitor satellite space-weather observations relayed from the US.

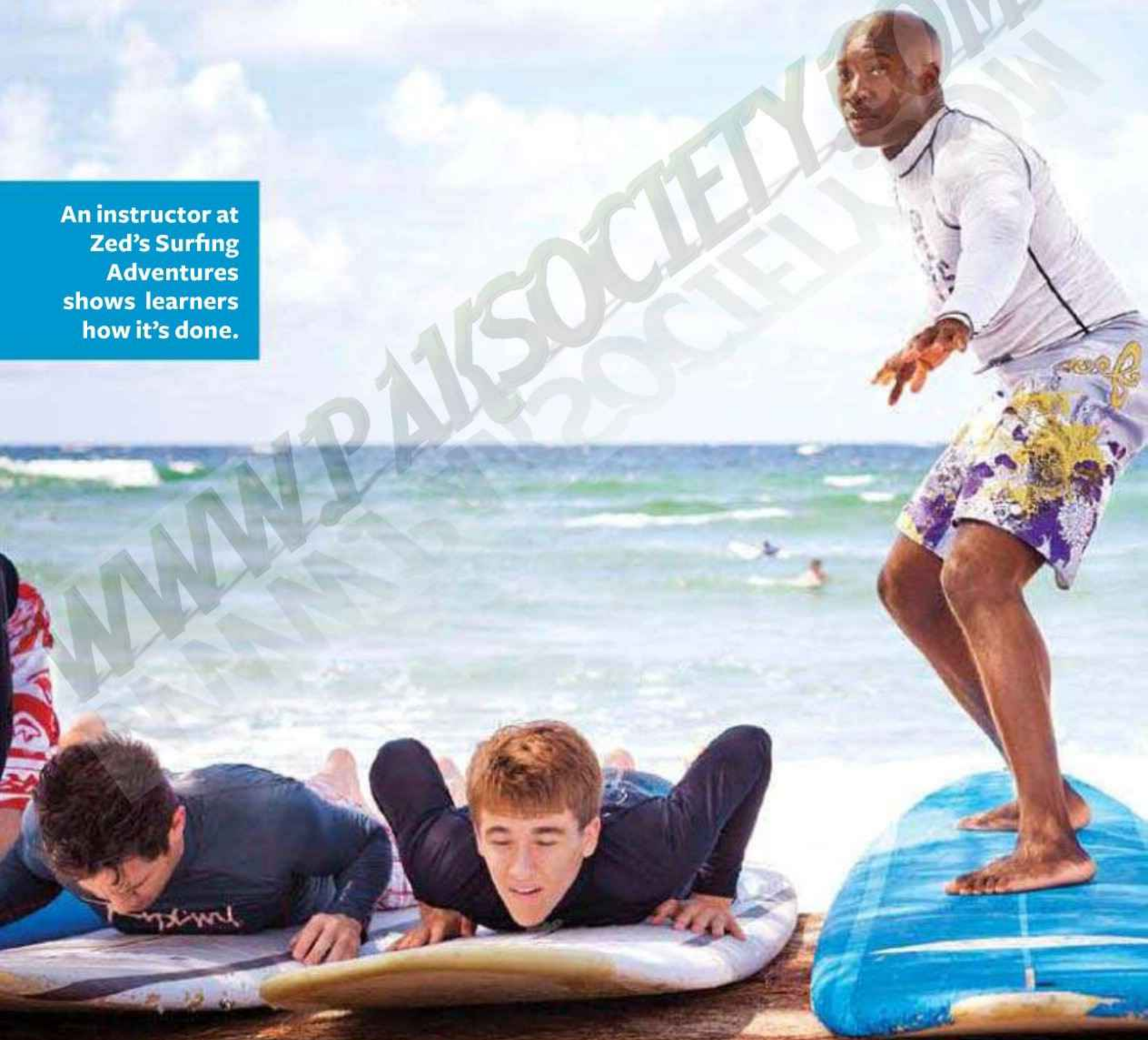
Much more remains to be done, scientists say. Hapgood also believes there's an urgent need to promote awareness of space weather in governments. "Too many policymakers think that space is empty and harmless, so they're tempted to cut budgets," he says.

The technology to make grids and other systems more robust does exist. Last June, the US Congress unanimously passed a bill to put it into use and ensure grid protection. It's urgent that similar steps are taken elsewhere.

When the big superstorm blasted in 1989, the sky was clear and Mike Hapgood drove up to the hills near his home in Oxford, UK, to photograph the brilliant aurora. "I wondered if the lights would still be on when I got home, and they were," he says. "But we might not be so lucky next time."

A lady to a friend: "My husband became lucky after his death."
"What do you mean?"
"They started digging his grave and struck oil." *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

It's a Won

An instructor at Zed's Surfing Adventures shows learners how it's done.

derful Life

Barbadians have a special relationship with each other and with their island

BY CHARLES KULANDER

FROM *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER*

© SUSAN SEUBERT

ON A SUN-DAPPLED BEACH, A PICNICKING FAMILY WAVES ME OVER AND INVITES ME TO A MEAL OF FLYING FISH WASHED DOWN WITH RUM. WHEN I TELL THEM HOW LUCKY THEY ARE TO LIVE ON THIS LOVELY ISLAND, MY HOST INTERRUPTS ME TO SAY BARBADOS IS NOT AN ISLAND AT ALL. BEING THE GUEST, I PLAY ALONG. "OKAY, THEN WHAT IS IT?"

"WE'RE A CONTINENT," HE SAYS, THROWING HIS ARMS TO THE SKY, "BECAUSE OUR HEARTS ARE SO BIG!" THEN HE LAUGHS.

A real Barbadian laugh begins deep in the belly, gains resonance as it rolls upward, then bursts out as a full-throated roar, often followed by after-shocks. This laughter, I'm learning, is the carefree expression of an island in deep love with itself. I had been told by more than one Caribbean friend that Barbados—"Little England"—is the most civil and polite island around. In other words, it's on the, well, boring side. But this isn't squaring with my experience so far. To me, it's feeling like the most engaging island in the Caribbean Sea.

Strictly speaking Barbados is not in the Caribbean. "We're in the North Atlantic," says Adrian Loveridge, my guide at the George Washington House, a museum set on an 18th century plantation outside of the capital Bridgetown. "Barbados sits on the edge of the Caribbean plate, east of the Windward Islands arc that traditionally divides the Caribbean from the Atlantic."

As Loveridge shows me the house where George Washington stayed for two months, I learn that a rule stating "no taxation without representation" was included in the Charter of Barbados more than a century before the American Revolution, that the island's 99.7 percent literacy is higher than that in the US (99 percent), and that Barbados lays claim to one of the most stable governments in the hemisphere. This is attributable in part to 339 years of British administration that ended with independence in 1966.

Yet call it Little England, and you'll find locals rolling their eyes. "Only half true," a Bridgetown street vendor near Barbados's British-style Parliament building tells me. "We may be little, but we're not England." Looking around, I see what he means: rum bars in lieu of pubs, vans blasting soca music (an offshoot of calypso) instead of double-decker buses, not to mention the barbecued pig tails I'm chewing on. But as I walk downtown, an unmistakable decorum hovers over the historic, orderly streets.

Yet under all of this apparent civility lurks the wound that has scarred so many Caribbean islands: slavery. When sugar plantations took off in Barbados's tropical climate in the 1640s, the British government shipped

John Moore Bar in Weston is a congenial gathering place on the waterfront.

in thousands of slaves from West Africa. The island abolished slavery in 1834, but the psychology of slave and master would take generations to change. So how did Barbados transcend such a history to become what feels like the Welcome Wagon of the Caribbean?

A clue comes the next day at Surfer's Point, on Barbados's southwest coast. I exchange small talk with Zed Layson, owner of Zed's Surfing Adventures. When I note a wisp of Irish in his speech, he tells me he's fifth-generation Barbadian, also known as Bajan. He is descended from prisoners from Ireland. "What a blessin'," he says, laughing. "Commit a crime against the Crown and get sent to paradise!" How, I ask, did those settlers go about creating communities in this faraway land? "It's all about sharing. We stem from our African slave culture and our British, Irish, Scottish, and Indian cultures, small flavourings that have fashioned a pepper pot of good livin'," says Layson.

This spirit is evident at the weekly Friday night fish fry in the fishing town of Oistins, on Barbados's south shore. Bajan cuisine revolves around seafood. In fact, Bajans don't eat much red meat, but you can stuff yourself to the gills with fresh fish. And, when the paper plates begin piling up, live music takes over. But as soca tunes blare forth, it's the tourists not the locals who jump up to shake their booties. The Bajans glide around their own dance floor in nearby Lexie's Bar to 1960s tunes.

The dance floor, I notice, is on a miniature tennis court, which is another part of the cultural puzzle here. "Road tennis" is a popular island version of the sport, a Bajan twist on Little England. "It started in the 1930s, when locals watched white folks play lawn tennis," explains McArthur Barrow, a road-tennis fanatic. "We weren't allowed in their clubs, so we

invented our own game." It's ingenious—a wood plank for a net, racquets made of plywood, a tennis ball with the fuzz removed—and it is played on any paved surface, often the street.

"Each community has its road tennis champion," Barrow tells me. "Guys compete with each other: play all day, cook up food, and relax." He hands me a racquet, then sets me up with an opponent. The players shout advice: "Move de feet, get behind de ball." Five minutes into it, and I'm wearing the same grin as everyone else.

Yet another British-inspired tradition, the Saturday horse race at Garrison Savannah, just south of Bridgetown, offers another glimpse into home-grown Bajan culture. "The race dates to the days of the planters," says a tanned man with tousled grey hair standing next to me. He introduces himself. "Cow ... like the barnyard animal," then shares a surprising fact about Barbados horse racing: "Barbadians don't bet. They're too financially conservative." It's the tourists who do all the serious wagering. The islanders are content to picnic around the track's perimeter, enjoying the pageantry and the socializing.

I ask Cow for his real name: "Sir Charles Williams, knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 2000 for sports development."

Taken aback, I mumble, "Uh, you're British?"

"One hundred percent Barbadian," he sniffs. "My ancestors, however, were sent here as prisoners by Oliver Cromwell. My family's been here for 356 years."

Back in the 1600s, man-catchers of Cromwell (the English leader who ruled, replacing the monarchy for a while) roamed Britain and Ireland to capture rebels and malcontents for forced labour on Barbadian plantations. Being "Barbadosed" was considered a fate worse than death for these Whites. Most of their descendants, like Zed and Cow, are plugged into mainstream Bajan society, but I'd heard stories of these "Redlegs" scraping out a living in remote pockets of the island.

Barbadian plantations, it turns out, were equal opportunity exploiters. When they switched from tobacco and cotton to more lucrative sugar, enslaved Africans replaced the Redlegs many times over. You won't find much evidence of this slave history today, except for a statue of a rebel slave leader named Bussa that stands in the roundabout just outside Bridgetown that spins me towards the island's wind-combed east coast. The area is still home to communities of blond-haired, blue-eyed descendants of the Redlegs.

At the Atlantis Hotel in Tent Bay, a landmark built in the 1800s, I find owner Andrew Warden sitting at the bar, newly refurbished along with the rest of what is now a boutique hotel. As we talk, I detect an accent. How does an Aussie end up halfway around the world in Tent Bay?

"My mother is actually Barbadian," he says, pointing to a sepia-toned

TRAVEL TIPS

GETTING THERE: International flights from London, New York and Frankfurt. Cruise ships dock at a state-of-the-art terminal near Bridgetown. **LODGING:** It's a small island—just 33km long by 22km wide—but that doesn't limit your choices for a place to stay. Guesthouses start at US$40 per night per couple. Coral Reef, a luxurious resort in Holetown on the west coast, costs a minimum of $250 in the summer and $465 in the winter. Atlantis Hotel in the village of Tent Bay, St Joseph, has ocean-front rooms for $255 per night. **DINING:** Seafood galore. Barbadian cuisine is characterized by African, Caribbean and European influences. Look for cou-cou, the national dish, on menus. It's cornmeal cooked with sliced okra, served with stewed fish. **ATTRACTIONS:** Vacationers taking a break from the golf course, spa or beach—the island boasts 110km of coastline—can visit a sugar museum and factory, a synagogue founded in 1654, and mansions open to the public. Another stop: the Barbados Museum, located in a 19th century British garrison. And in Bridgetown's Queen's Park stands one of the island's two landmark Baobab trees, which are native to Africa. It measures 20m around. **MORE INFORMATION:** *www.barbados.org*

photograph showing men with straggly beards and haunted faces. "Those are my relatives."

"Redlegs?"

"Yup," he says. "People who look like that still live in the hills here."

The next morning I head inland, towards the hills. The first "Redleg" I see looks like the men in Warden's photograph; a straggly beard, pyjama top, raggedy shorts—and clutching a long machete. He nods curtly, then recedes into the brush. The second man I meet, Richard King, isn't so shy. He's well into his 70s and has lived here all his life, growing yams and other vegetables. He doesn't know where his ancestors came from, but his twinkling blue eyes tell their own story.

What's the best thing about life in this place? "We've always had peace and quiet," he says. "I know the island's changing. I just hope the quiet sticks around."

I wonder about those whose ancestors were shipped over from the Ghana slave forts. I drive inland to one of the oldest non-white villages on Barbados. The place I'm looking for was founded half a century before the abolition of slavery, when a plantation owner deeded land to his slave mistress and her four children. But I can't find Sweet Bottom on the map—for a reason, I discover, when I finally stumble upon it. "The government think the name too crude, so they change it to Sweet Vale," says Velda Merrick, one of a group of ladies in long flowered skirts and white blouses hoeing furrows of yam sprouts.

Richard Hoad, a goat farmer and columnist, has family roots in Barbados going back to the 1850s.

© SUSAN SEUBERT

I ask Merrick how she manages what looks like backbreaking work. "Sun too hot, day too long, money's no good, but it's deh life we love," she says, as the other women bob their heads in agreement.

To get perspective, I visit Richard Hoad, goat farmer and irascible columnist for Barbados's *Nation* newspaper. Hoad's family came from England in the 1850s to set up a business in Bridgetown. As we sit on his patio, I ask for his take on the island's seemingly innate congeniality. "We Bajans meet on common ground, eat the same food, listen to the same music," Hoad says. "We even think alike. It gives you a real nice together feeling."

How did getting Barbadosed change from a virtual death sentence to a heartwarming experience? I chalk it up to a special alchemy between Barbadians and their magical island. It creates moments when you suddenly feel part of everything around you. And you don't have to be Bajan to experience it.

My moment occurs on my last night when I see a crowd watching a road-tennis match in Speightstown. When they spot the racquet in my hand, they rush me into the lineup, and soon I'm facing a player known as The Rock. He gives me no quarter. I'm in the zone, though, and seeing the ball as big as a breadfruit. The Rock hits a sitter, and I slam it with all the topspin I can muster, sending the ball between his legs. Everyone on the sidelines claps and laughs as I stand there with a loopy smile under the amber halo of a streetlight. With my heart feeling as big as a continent, I'm pretty sure I've just been Barbadosed.

NOTHING BUT THE TOOTH

After imbibing at her young son's birthday party, an angry Tina Gonzales bit her Florida, USA, neighbour. Cops pinned the crime on her by counting tooth marks on the victim. Gonzales was the only adult present with all her teeth.

From the Internet

Good thing my husband Tim and I are afraid of different things. One humid night, Tim, and I were watching TV with the balcony door open. Suddenly, we saw a moth fluttering around the room. I screamed a nd Tim grabbed a broom. He flicked on the light and we realized it wasn't a moth, but a bat.

He screamed. I grabbed the broom and shooed the bat away.

Johanne Beaurone

My sciatica problem coincided with both my children leaving the nest for their respective colleges. So a friend of my husband teased him about reviving the romance in our lives now that we were alone.

"Actually, my wife is in bed," my husband responded, "but for all wrong reasons."

Chandrika R. Krishnan, Bangalore

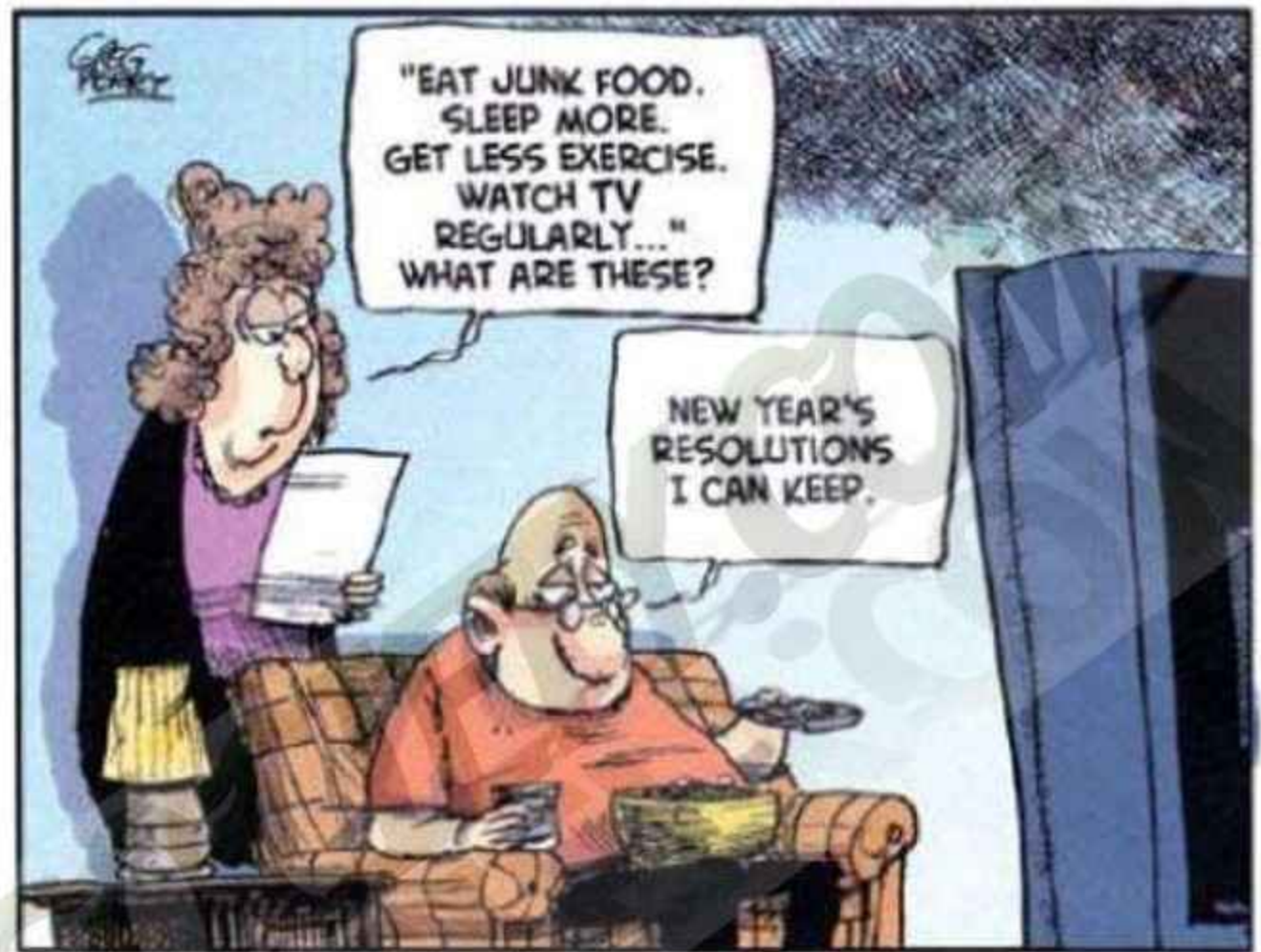
My mother came back from her trip to the mall looking exhausted. When I asked her what was wrong, she said, "I'm not going to be able to sleep tonight." Worried that something was wrong, I pressed further. Finally, she let it out: "Well, I was at the East Asian festival and only the coffee was free."

Helen Duzhou

When my niece was a student, her class of six-year-olds sang "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" at a concert. The line "God and sinners reconciled" was a tricky one for this age group. One little boy, with a voice that completely drowned out the rest of the choir, happily belted out, "God and sinners dressed in style!"

Jessie Robertson

The article I read about gathering down from geese was so interesting, I had to share it with my husband. "Do you know how to get down from a goose?" I asked. His answer: "Jump?" *Joan C. Wilson*

ILLUSTRATED BY GREG PERRY

The Good Fight

While you celebrate Valentine's Day, here's the argument (from a married man) that couple conflict isn't all that bad

BY TOM JUNOD from *Esquire*

You fight. You don't want to, but you do. You fight because of things she does that you don't like and things you do that she doesn't like. The things themselves are not important; what's important is that you both always do them. You may say you are fighting about her habits, and she may say she is fighting about yours—that you are fighting over the nearly daily discovery that habits are inextinguishable. But really, you are fighting because you are married, and fighting is about as intrinsic to marriage as sex.

What do you fight about? Simple: You fight about what you always fight about. You fight about what you have always fought about.

If you want to stay married, you don't have to be able to stop fighting; you have to be able to keep fighting, in the same way.

Fights are not just arguments that don't end. They are arguments that enter a dimension different from the one in which they started. They're volatile, often imaginative, and always terribly personal. They are, in other words, what sex should be.

People know a lot more about your fighting than you think they do. Your children are especially unfooled, for though you don't have sex in front of them, you fight in front of them, or at least within their earshot, and your fights will forever serve as their introduction to the complexities of adulthood. You think that some fights are trivial because they are over trivial matters. Your children understand that there are no trivial fights,

JON FEINGERSH/GETTY IMAGES

because each fight has the potential to grow into the kind of fight that ends your marriage.

What kind of fight is that? The kind of fight you win. The question is not who can win, because anyone can win if they're willing to win at the cost of love and respect. The question is who can abstain from winning, who can resist the temptation of winning, which, like any other marital temptation, is always there.

But how do you do that? Well, you don't go to sleep angry, as the old saying goes. And you don't say what can't be unsaid. And you don't fight drunk. And you never end a fight by having sex with someone else instead of each other. Infidelity is the final measure of victory and defeat.

What do you fight for, if you can't fight to win? You are fighting for power, of course—but if your marriage is healthy, you will fight to restore the balance of power instead of fighting to destroy it.

You are fighting as a way of voicing your objections to the person you have chosen to live your life with—but if your marriage is healthy, the fight will end in surrender rather than loss. Sex matters to a marriage. Fidelity matters to a marriage. But fighting matters to a marriage because what matters most to a marriage is forgiveness, and forgiveness doesn't come free.

You have to fight for it. ■

SPEAK EASY

GETTING YOUR TONGUE AROUND SOME TRICKY WORDS

BY HAZEL FLYNN & THE EDITORS

RIHANNA
As the Barbados-born R&B singer sings, "Oh, na, na, what's my name?"

SHIA LABEOUF
The *Transformers* star's hard-to-say surname is a variation of "the beef" in French.

Every day we negotiate our way through the hazards of modern life: trans-fats, road-raged drivers, addictively bad reality TV. But what about that hidden social problem—the confusion and embarrassment caused when we speak hard-to-pronounce words?

Perhaps you can bravely bear the withering look of the teenagers at the family gathering when you mistakenly sound out the "h" in singer Rihanna's name, saying *Re-Hannah* instead of *Ree-anna*.

Maybe you can shrug off the pitying glance thrown your way by the kid behind the video counter when you mangle the unusual moniker of *Transformers* star Shia LaBeouf, instead of tripping out *Shy-er La-Buff* with ease.

But what about when your friends start talking about a popular new ingredient, *keen-wah*, and you have no idea what they're on about? Sure, you've seen the word "quinoa" written down —and assumed, quite reasonably, that it would be pronounced *quinn-ower*.

Here, then, is a handy guide to some of the other trickiest words and names you're likely to encounter.

(RIHANNA, LABOEUF) GETTY IMAGES; THINKSTOCK; (PIZZA) LISA THORNBERG/ISTOCKPHOTO

FOOD AND DRINK

açaí: Right up there with quinoa as an unguessable pronunciation, say this Amazonian fruit as **ah-sigh-ee**.

pizza: If a waiter corrects your pronunciation of this Italian pie, be nice and tip him generously. Stick with **peet-sah**. Several other words too (Nazi, mozzarella, etc) have that interfering t, because in Italian and German, the z is pronounced "tz".

dessert: In speech, the pudding (or kheer) gets differentiated from the barren sandy land just by their pronunciations. For the sweet thing, say **dis-sert**. (If you say you had *des-sert*, you might sound like you're Lawrence of Arabia.)

jus: *MasterChef* has made a lot of French cooking terms familiar, but this name for the sauces in the pan still traps the unwary. It's **zhoo**.

pho: Unless you speak Vietnamese, you'd never know this noodle soup is pronounced **fuh**.

quesadilla: The double-L in this Mexican dish becomes a "y" sound, thus **kay-sa-dee-ya**. Same rule for the other Mex delicacy, tortilla. Say **tor-tee-ya**.

lasagne: If you're one of the many who can't get this right, that "g" isn't your fault. Forget it and say **luh-zahn-ya**.

MOVIES AND MUSIC

!!!: The members of this US band took their name after watching the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, where the Bushmen speak with mere clicks of the tongue. !!! is best pronounced **chk-chk-chk**, although one band member prefers to click his tongue thrice.

Marion Cotillard: Pronounce the name of the French Oscar-winner (*La Vie en Rose*) as **co-tee-yard**.

Zach Galifianakis (*right*): *The Hangover* star's surname is **gal-if-uh-nak-iss**.

Ioan Gruffudd: The Welsh *Hornblower* pin-up's name is pronounced **yo-an griffith**.

Moog: These makers of musical synthesizers must have one of the most mispronounced company names on the planet. Forget the way it looks and say **moe-g**.

Joaquin Phoenix: The *Walk The Line* star changed his first name to "Leaf" for a while in his teens, but reverted to his birth name, pronounced **wah-keen**.

Saoirse Ronan: The first name of the Irish star of *The Lovely Bones* and the upcoming *The Hobbit* is said **seer-shuh**.

Beethoven: The German composer's name is often mispronounced. Try saying **bay-tow-ven**.

Kirsten Dunst: The *Spider-Man* love interest prefers *keer-sten* to *ker-sten*.

BOOKS

J.M. Coetzee: Say the adopted Australian Nobel Laureate's surname as **cut-zee-uh**.

Eoin Colfer (*below*): As the international best-selling Irish children's author (*Artemis Fowl*) notes on every page of his website: "It's pronounced **owen**!"

Li Cunxin: Fans often stumble over the *Mao's Last Dancer* author's name, pronounced **lee schwin-sing**.

Anais Nin: The famed French erotic author's first name is **anna-ees**, not *a-nigh-iss*.

Joseph Pulitzer (*right*): Not *pewl-litt-ser*, as it is often said, the name of this newspaper tycoon, commemorated via literary prizes, is **pull-it-sir**.

Ayn Rand: The author of *The Fountainhead*'s name should sound like **eye-n** not *ain*.

OTHERS

Beijing: Linguistics professor Kate Burridge describes the common *bay-zhing* mispronunciation of this city as "hyper-foreignism." Closer to the original Chinese sound is the less exotic **bay-jing**.

Hermès: This very upscale fashion house is pronounced as **air-mez** by those in the know.

alumnus: If, like a lot of people, you think it has to sound like the metal with a similar name, you're making others smile. So if you're educated enough to be an alumnus somewhere and you're at the get-together next time, say **alam-nus**. (The plural is alumni.)

etc: Here's one word where the long form (etcetera) is almost never used in writing. But when you say it, you need to pronounce the third e, just as it is written. Say **et-cetera**.

lambaste: If it were just *baste*, you woul dn't get it wrong, but *lambaste*, seen in political reporting, where somebody "from the opposition lambasted the minister," is often erroneously pronounced *lam-bast*. Say **lam-bayste**.

machete: That's a heavy knife. But words like this make you want to knife the very basics of the English language. Other words where the "e" is pronounced like an "i" include Penelope, anemone, adobe and abalone. Get it right and say **ma-sheti**.

duplex: As in duplex apartment. Many think it's a French word (perhaps because there was the French general named Dupleix in India) and hence the silent x. But duplex is an American coinage, and the x lives on. Say **dyoo-plex**.

robot: another word that's not French, but it was first used in a Czech play. Say **ro-bot**. ■

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Two men took a test at a job interview and both scored nine out of ten. When one was offered the job, the other asked why he didn't get it.

"Simple," said the manager. "You each answered the first nine questions correctly but, on the tenth, the successful candidate wrote, 'I don't know.'

"You wrote, 'Neither do I'. "

Sharon Glynn

I think I figured out why I gained so much weight this year. We moved into a new house a year ago, and I just realized there's one more box still left to unpack. A year later! No wonder someone that lazy is gaining weight. Also, the box is labelled, "Lloyd's sports equipment."

Lloyd Ravn

Every time I buy something, I have to get rid of something. So I've had to throw a lot of my husband's stuff away.

Rita Rudner

I applied for a job at the English Dictionary after a friend said he'd put a word in for me.

A. Roase

I met Stephen Hawking the other day and said to him, "Do you know that most people think you're American because of your computerized voice?"

Hawking said, "Tell me something I don't know." And that was the end of that conversation.

Internet

I admire these phone hackers. I think they have a lot of patience. I can't even be bothered to check my own voicemails.

Andrew Lawrence

I'm good friends with 25 letters of the alphabet. I don't know Y.

Chris Turner

Come Again?

England's *Private Eye* is one of the oldest satirical magazines. Nothing makes the editors happier than sports gaffes like these:

- Sometimes the pendulum swings both ways." *Kevin Keegan*, ESPN
- "Look at them, smiling like Cheshire cheeses all round." *Tim Wonnacott*, BBC One
- "He recovered that well, rising from the ashes like a sphincter." *Craig Charles*, Challenge TV

A tramp knocks on the door of an inn known as St George and the Dragon. The landlady answers. "Could you give a poor man something to eat?" asks the tramp.

"No!" yells the woman, slamming the door in his face. A few minutes later, he knocks again. "Now what do you want?" the woman asks.

"Could I have a few words with George?" *David Miteff*

Derek had a customized suit made by a world-renowned tailor. At the final fitting, he remarked that the left sleeve was a trifle long.

"Just lower your left shoulder a little and stick your arm out and the sleeve will be perfect," said the tailor.

Derek said that this made a crease appear above the chest. "Push your stomach out, put your right hand on your hip and the crease will disappear."

Derek said that the trousers didn't seem to hang correctly. "Swing your right leg out to the right and the trousers will look perfect," said the tailor.

Overawed by the famous clothier, Derek paid for his new outfit and wore it home. He walked along the pavement holding his left shoulder down, sticking his left arm out, putting his right hand on his hip, pushing his stomach out and swinging his right leg to one side.

Two doctors passed by.

"What do you suppose is wrong with that poor fellow?" asked one.

"I don't know," replied his colleague, "But he's got a damned good tailor."

Scene: The Garden of Eden.
Eve to Adam: "Do you love me?"
Adam to Eve: "Do I have a choice?"

Masoud Shiehmorteza

A man is woken up late at night by a knock on the front door. When he opens it, he meets a little snail on the doorstep, who's selling encyclopedias. Annoyed by the late-night intruder, he boots the poor snail far into the bushes. He slams the door and heads to bed. Two years later the man is getting ready for work when he hears a knock on the door. It's the same snail, who shouts angrily: "What was that all about?"

Maurice Poitras

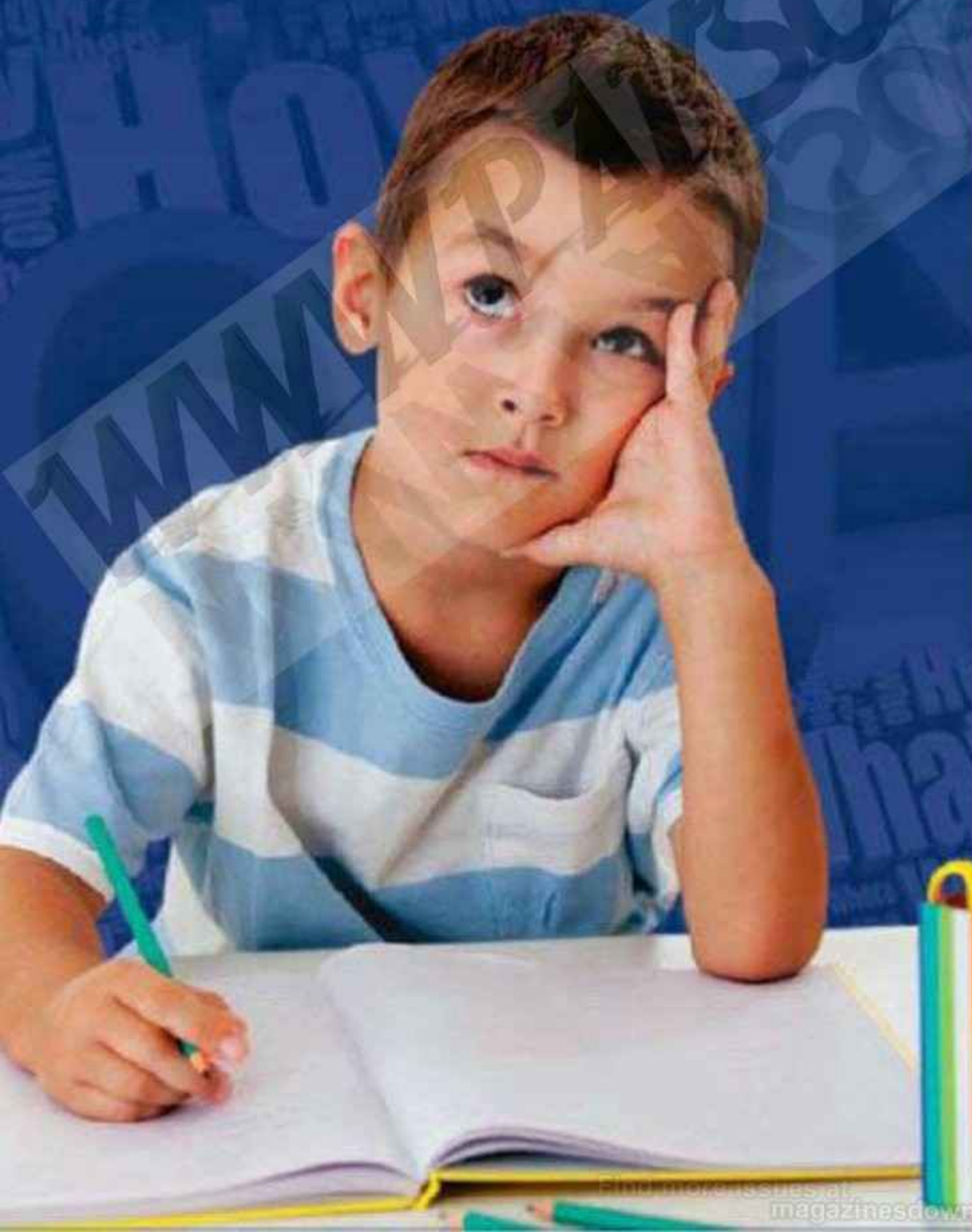
We will pay for your Laughter anecdotes. Post it to the Editorial address or e-mail: editor.india@rd.com

Reader's Digest NATIONAL SCHOOL QUIZ 2011

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

SAIL, BOKARO STEEL PLANT, BOKARO

Seven years of inter-school quizzing

The Reader's Digest Quiz—Reinforcing children's reading habits and enhancing general knowledge

QUIZZING WIZARDS SHINE AT BOKARO

Thirty-nine schools participated at the READER'S DIGEST National School Quiz 2011 which was held at the Bokaro Steel City on 17th and 18th December, 2011.

It was inaugurated by S. S. Mohanty, Managing Director of Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL), Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and other executive directors and general managers of the BSL.

Sanjay Tewary, Chief of Communications, BSL, anchored the program in the HRD auditorium of SAIL at Bokaro.

After the elimination rounds, the participants battled it out in the semi-finals. In the end, the top 14 teams from each group made it to the finals. It was a nail-biting affair with exciting audio and video rounds also thrown in.

Quiz master Parnab

Mukherjee had an unique style of getting the participants involved.

The grand finale rounds had the audience on their toes as the quiz master fired questions from subjects chosen by participants.

The first prize in the junior category was bagged by St. Michael's School, Siliguri. The runner-up in the same category was Mahatma Gandhi School, Madurai.

The first prize in the senior category was won by Rani Public School, Vadakara, Kerala. The runner-up was Petil Senihigher Secondary School, Pondichery. The Best Quizzer Award went to Shri Gurunanak School, Ranchi.

On 18th December 2011, a workshop was organized by Reader's Digest for all participants to attend a workshop on public speaking and preparing for quizzing events. The participants benefitted from tips they picked up and also enjoyed sharing ideas.

We would like to thank S. S. Mohanty, MD, Bokaro Steel Plant, SAIL, Bokaro, Sanjay Tewari, Chief of Communications, V. K. Singh, DGM, CSR Education, L&A and his team members for having supported this event wholeheartedly. It was hosted by BSL-Bokaro for the fourth year in a row. This annual event conducted to encourage children to read and enhance their general knowledge is now in its seventh year.

Mr. S. S. Mohanty, Managing Director, Bokaro Steel Plant handing over the Senior Winners Trophy to students of Rani Public School, Vadakara, Kerala

The junior winners of St. Michale's School, Siliguri receiving the trophy from Mr. Vinod Das, Senior General Manager-Sales

Best quizzer was bagged by a student from Guru Nanak School, Ranchi.

Mr. Parnab Mukherjee, the Quiz Master questioning the participants.

Look >>
SEE THE WORLD
DIFFERENTLY

<<Twice

The Beehive Rockets Festival celebrated in Yenshui, Taiwan, has its origins in a late 19th century cholera epidemic there. Locals prayed to Kuanyu, a Chinese deity, and set off fireworks to ward off evil spirits (and the disease). Every year, Taiwanese still parade the streets bearing statues of Kuanyu in palanquins. As the procession passes, some 600,000 rockets, many packed in honeycomb-like temporary walls, are lit. Locals and tourists come out in protective gear, looking like firemen, to brave the explosions. This year's festival starts on February 5.

FIRST PHOTO: STEVEN R. BARRINGER
SECOND PHOTO: COMUS

BOOK BONUS

Paul McCartney, the legendary former Beatle, has struggled all his life to find a true and lasting love

The Love He Makes

BY HOWARD SOUNES

FROM *FAB: AN INTIMATE LIFE OF PAUL MCCARTNEY*

© TERRY O'NEILL/GETTY IMAGES

Paul McCartney and John Lennon flew to New York on 11th May 1968 to promote their company Apple Records. A sizeable crowd greeted them at John F. Kennedy Airport and trailed them to their hotel. The next day the two Beatles held a meeting on a boat sailing around the Statue of Liberty, and later they gave a press conference.

Linda Eastman, a photojournalist, showed up at the press conference. Paul had met the attractive young photographer in London the previous summer. She'd been shooting pictures for a book on musicians, and the two had been introduced at a bar. She'd gone back to Paul's house with several people, but memories are hazy about what happened that night. "You just think, it's yet another girl, yet another night," remarked Dudley Edwards, a McCartney friend.

"It was at the Apple press conference that my relationship with Paul was rekindled," Linda recalled. "I managed to slip him my phone number. He rang me up and told me they were leaving that evening, but he'd like it if I was able to travel to the airport with them. So I went out in their limousine, sandwiched between Paul and John."

Nat Weiss, an Apple business partner in New York, was also in the limousine. To his mind, this was all part of Linda's relentless campaign to make Paul her husband. "Linda's been after him for the longest time," he said. "But I don't think he'd made his mind up about Linda at that point."

Paul and Jane were engaged. But they were not getting along. **As soon as Paul returned to London he took another woman to bed.**

McCartney returned to England to record *The Beatles*—better known as the White Album after its plain white sleeve—an unapologetically ambitious and arty record. By this stage in their career, the Beatles were working individually, creating very different and individual songs. While John Lennon wrote numbers such as "Revolution" and "Yer Blues"; and George Harrison contributed "While My Guitar Gently Weeps," Paul supplied some of the most famous and enduring tracks on the album, including "Back In The USSR," "Blackbird," "Mother Nature's Son," and the delightfully silly "Rocky Raccoon."

The musical variety was partly the result of the fact the Beatles were no longer a harmonious team. They were increasingly at war with one another, often working on their own songs, sniping at each other and the staff.

In a way Yoko Ono was responsible for the shake-up, though her presence ultimately proved toxic. She had usurped John Lennon's first wife Cynthia and moved into John's country estate called Kenwood. Yoko went everywhere with John, even to recording sessions. Yoko was not like Cynthia, or George and Ringo's wives, who were all docile partners to the Beatles. And she was not like Paul's longtime girlfriend Jane Asher, who had a career as an actress and was assiduous in not getting mixed up in Paul's work.

When the band assembled at the end of May 1968, Paul, George and Ringo were flabbergasted to find Yoko sitting with John, intending to stay there while they recorded. In the past the Beatles hadn't liked people in the studio—except occasionally for someone to perform backup vocals or shake a tambourine. Now Yoko was sitting with the boys, contributing vocals and

offering opinions in the control room.

It was also unheard of for band members to leave London while an album was in production. Yet Paul, George and Ringo all decided to leave town. Paul went up north to be best man at his brother's wedding, taking Jane Asher with him.

Paul and Jane were engaged to be married. But they were not getting along. They seemed happy at the wedding, but as soon as Paul returned to London he took another woman to bed. She was Francie Schwartz, a screenwriter who had come to London to try to sell a movie script to Apple. Francie soon moved into Paul's London house, known as Cavendish, and was trailing after him to the Apple office.

Paul and Jane Asher in 1967. She had her own career and did not get involved in Paul's work.

Changing of the Guard

Paul went back into the recording studio for more work. Then he left again to go on a business trip to Los Angeles. While on a layover in New York, he picked up the phone and called Linda Eastman. He left a message saying he was on his way to the US West Coast, staying at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

That evening Paul checked into the hotel, then hit the clubs. The next morning he fooled around at the pool with some girls he'd met. Later he went for a meeting at Capitol Records. When he came back to the hotel to change before his next engagement, there was Linda sitting on his doorstep. She had taken the first available flight from New York.

"So immediately Paul got me to clear away all the birds, and just locked himself in the room with her," recalled Apple staff member Tony Bramwell. Paul and Linda spent the next day on movie director Mike Nichols's motorboat. "They were absolutely inseparable; it was like instant," noted Bramwell. "She was perfect for

him: motherly... big-breasted, and she had a *je ne sais quoi.*" *

Like Paul, Linda was a dedicated pothead. She'd brought a bag of marijuana with her, which they dipped into, becoming closer as they got stoned. "We were all amazed by the depth of feeling Paul obviously had for Linda," added Bramwell, noting that when they checked out of the Beverly Hills Hotel the next day, Paul and Linda were "like Siamese twins, holding hands and gazing into each other's eyes all the way to the airport."

Linda returned to New York, and Paul flew to London. Paul resumed work on the new album and diverse other Apple projects. He raced between home, office, recording studio and night clubs, all while the Beatles were getting on each other's nerves. Meanwhile, Paul's personal life was descending into farce.

One morning, according to Francie, she and Paul were in bed together at Cavendish when there was a knock at the bedroom door. "Who is it?" asked Paul, for there were always friends floating around the house.

"Jane," replied his fiancée, who had returned to London to appear in a play.

Paul leapt out of bed, put on some clothes and led Jane downstairs and into the garden. Francie came to the window. Paul yelled at Francie to get back inside. Then Jane left. A little later, her mother came to the house and boxed up her daughter's belongings.

A few days afterwards, Jane appeared on a television show, telling the interviewer that her engagement to Paul was off. "It's finished," she said firmly, which was all she had to say on the matter, then and ever more.

Meanwhile, John and Yoko left Kenwood and moved in with Paul at Cavendish. They all watched TV together, and reportedly ate opium cookies, but the situation soon got awkward and John and Yoko went to live with Ringo at his London flat.

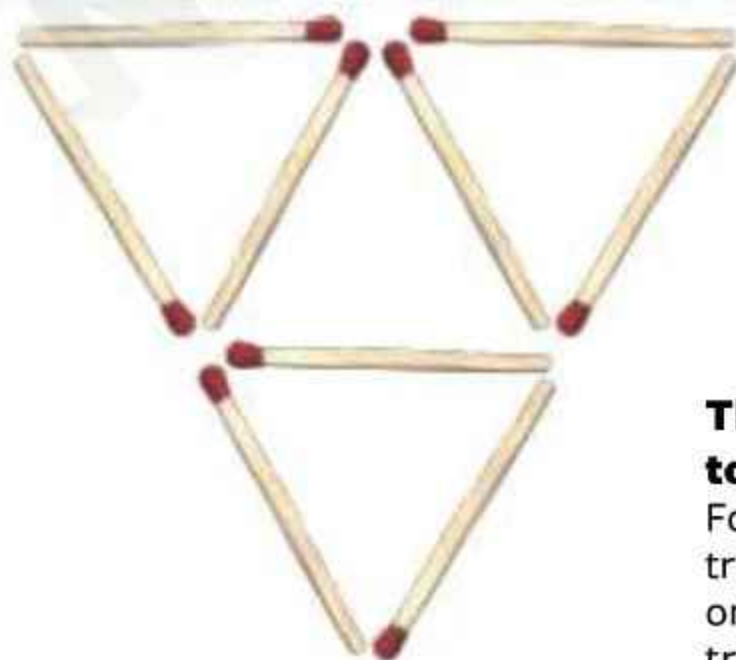
At this stage, Paul gave Francie her marching orders. "Schwartz thought there was a lot of love on his side for her," said Beatles public relations man Tony Barrow. "But there was none that I could detect. He used her entirely."

Meanwhile, John was demanding a divorce from Cynthia, and many of the Beatles people were scared of talking to her, lest it offend John. But Paul contacted her, and one day drove over to Kenwood to tell her how sorry he was about the way John had treated her. It was Paul's habit to dream up

*An indescribable quality about her.

CHALLENGE ANSWERS

SEE PAGE 169

Square off
C is the missing figure.

Three to five
Four small triangles and one large triangle.

songs on his way to Kenwood, for this was where he and John met to write songs in the old days. Once again, the journey engendered a song, intending to cheer up John's five-year-old son Julian. "I started with the idea, 'Hey Jules,' which was Julian, 'don't make it bad, take a sad song and make it better. Hey, try to deal with this terrible thing'."

Paul perfected the song back at home, ironically, while John and Yoko were visiting. The Beatles recorded "Hey Jude" as a single, rather than a White Album track. It was unusual because the song was over seven minutes long at a time when most pop songs were under three.

Paul sang the first word, "Hey" before a note had been struck, hitting the first chord on the piano on "Jude." Then he accompanied himself, joined by the others in the second verse, as the song began to build and build until Paul screamed "WHAARRR"—thus beginning the impassioned four-minute coda, the Beatles rocking out over a 36-piece orchestra as John and George repeated the Zen-like Na na na nas. Seldom has such a simple refrain sounded so powerful.

But aside from the recording of "Hey Jude," the Beatles were causing chaos in the studio. There was, as George Harrison said, a "weird vibe." Then Ringo temporarily quit the band. He said he wasn't playing well and felt out of things, saying, "You three are really close." John replied that he thought it was the other three who were really close, while George, who was the youngest, had always felt ignored by Paul and John.

Meanwhile, Paul was tiring of his hedonistic bachelor life. So he reached out to the one woman who had made sense to him in recent months. Linda was in California on assignment when Paul called and invited her to London.

Paul perfected "Hey Jude" and the group recorded the song. **But aside from that, the Beatles were causing chaos in the studio.**

Linda finished up her photographs, went back to New York, then flew on to London. Paul was at the studio when she arrived, so Linda went over to Abbey Road, [where London's famed EMI recording studios are located] and took pictures of the band. It was late September 1968, almost the end of the Beatles, but the beginning of Paul and Linda's life together.

Linda was a year older than Paul, the daughter of a wealthy New York lawyer who represented high-earning show business clients. She was Jewish, but her dad had changed their name from Epstein to Eastman. Linda was raised in wealthy Scarsdale, NY, and East Hampton, Long Island, growing

up to be a tall strawberry blonde, as if inhabiting the upper-class name her dad had chosen.

At age 17, Linda went to the University of Arizona, where she met her first husband, Mel See, got married and had a daughter. Two years later they separated and Linda and her daughter moved back to New York. She rented an apartment and started a career as a photographer, photographing parties of the rich and famous.

Linda was a rock 'n' roll groupie who had been around, and by the time she met Paul she had notched up at least 20 lovers, many of whom were famous. It was apparent that apart from having fun, she was looking for a rich, groovy guy who could look after her. A friend in New York remembers Linda telling him, even before she met Paul, that she had her sights set on McCartney. "She said she was going to marry him."

Apart from being his lover, Linda was a steadfast lieutenant for Paul. "She watched his back," said manager Peter Brown, "totally and utterly loyal, and looked after his needs domestically and in every other way."

Another quality Paul appreciated was that Linda preferred the simple life, and so did he to a degree. She also had bucket-loads of American confidence, which he liked. Both were relaxed and open about sex. They told each other everything about their past. Linda loved rock 'n' roll in a way Paul's previous girlfriend Jane never had, and unlike Jane this girl wasn't uptight about drugs.

Although a modern, liberated woman in some ways, Lin (as Paul called her) wasn't a committed careerist. She was already tired of scratching a living as a rock 'n' roll photographer, more than ready to settle with a man who could look after her and her daughter. She would happily let Paul take the traditional masculine role, which seemed like the natural order to a young man who, despite his sophisticated life, was a product of England's conservative northern working class.

Linda was a steadfast lieutenant for Paul. "She watched his back," said his manager. **She happily let Paul take the traditional masculine role.**

When Linda mentioned that she wanted to stop using the Pill, Paul agreed, and she fell pregnant. The couple decided to marry, and on 12th March 1969, they went to the registrar's office and signed the marriage certificate. They stopped by a church for a blessing, held a reception at a hotel, and went to New York for their honeymoon.

Linda came into Paul's life at a difficult time. The Beatles were breaking up, and Paul nearly had a breakdown

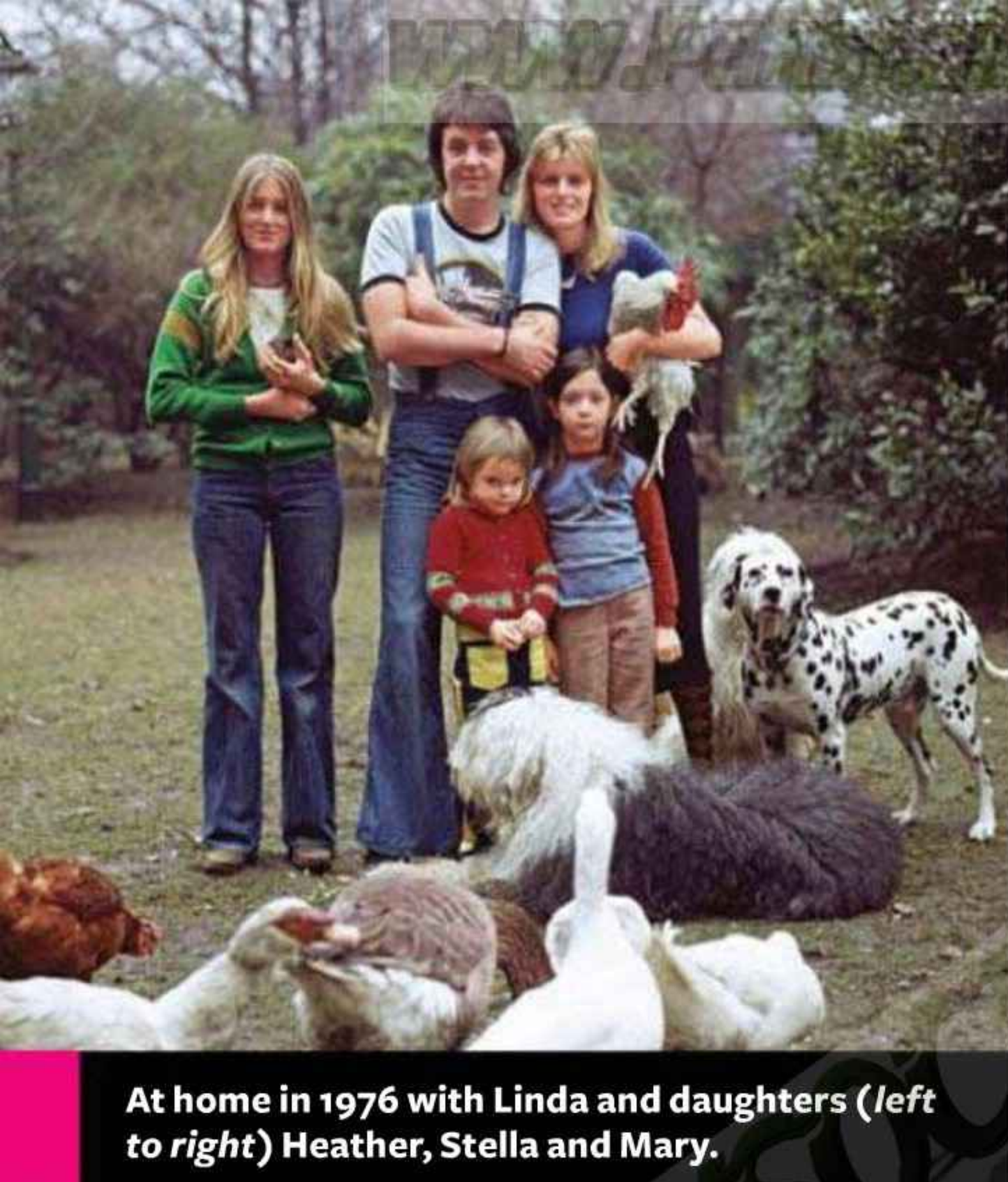
as a result. "The hurt of it all, the disappointment, and the sorrow of losing this great band, these great friends... I was going crazy. I wouldn't get up in the morning; and when I did I'd reach for a drink."

Ironically, there were striking similarities between Linda and Yoko, two strong women who elbowed aside the loyal, sweet-natured Englishwomen John and Paul had been with for so long. Yoko was older than Linda, born in Japan, but Yoko came to America as a girl and became almost as American as Linda herself. Like Linda's father, Yoko's dad was a man of wealth, a New York financier.

Linda and Yoko both drifted into the New York bohemian scene—Yoko a conceptual artist, Linda a photographer. Furthermore, when they met the Beatles, both were divorcees with young daughters.

Paul and Linda Eastman in 1970, the year after their marriage. He was deeply devoted to her.

It was Linda who told Paul that there was a way forward. He could make music without the Beatles. She would help, if he liked. So Paul began to think about a post-Beatles career, relying on Linda's advice and developing an even deeper devotion to her. They became so close they were like twins. Shortly after they were married, he wrote "Maybe I'm Amazed," a powerful expression of uxorious love for the woman who'd saved him from a situation that, as he sang, he didn't understand. Later, he wrote another devotion to Linda, "My Love," which topped the charts in 1973.

By marrying Paul, Linda became a public figure. But the media found Linda abrasive, lacking in charm. Some of Paul's friends considered her a phoney, manipulating Paul and using him to make herself a star. Yet it was Paul who insisted that Linda join his band Wings, even though she was

At home in 1976 with Linda and daughters (*left to right*) Heathe, Stella and Mary.

clearly an amateur. And most people felt that Linda was not interested in fame, but was humouring Paul in trying to play the part of a band member.

The Long and Winding Road

Paul and Linda made music and went on tour together. Paul adopted Linda's daughter, and they had three children of their own, creating a strong family life around their various properties in England. Linda was soppy about animals and, under her influence, Paul became animal-mad too. Later, Linda was the driving force in turning vegetarian—they even fed their animals a vegetarian diet whenever possible.

Being a parent changed Paul. Family life was all-important, and when he took Wings on tour there was a strong family feel to the enterprise. Backstage, people were liable to find the McCartney kids drawing pictures or sleeping in cots. For one European tour they outfitted a brightly coloured bus with bean bags and mattresses, providing huge fun for the kids.

Although Linda and Paul continued to smoke pot, Linda enforced a ban on drugs backstage at concerts. There was also an official ban on groupies. That way Linda kept Paul away from temptation, though he showed no signs of straying. "I never saw Paul with another woman," says Wings band member Denny Laine.

Indeed, Denny hardly ever saw Paul without Linda. If Paul walked into a room, you could bet that Linda would follow. "He wanted somebody he could rely on," says Denny, explaining the attraction Paul felt for his wife. "She came from money, so he could trust she wasn't after his money, and they had the kids. The kids went everywhere with them. This was a life he hadn't had much of and really loved."

It was in 1995 that Linda felt a lump under her arm and went to see her doctor. She had a lumpectomy in December 1995, removing the cancerous tumour and surrounding tissue. Paul and Linda then retired to their estate in Sussex to allow Linda to recuperate. As he watched his wife,

Paul was reminded of his mother's illness. She'd died of breast cancer in 1956, when Paul was 14—a trauma Paul never forgot, nor wholly got over.

Paul idealized his mother, a woman who worked as a nurse and midwife, yet who came home at night and cooked dinner and always had time for her children. Paul immortalized his mother and hardworking women like her in "Lady Madonna, children at your feet/Wonder how you manage to make ends meet."

Now his wife suffered the same fate. In the summer of 1997 they travelled to New York so Linda could be treated at the renowned Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, only to find that the cancer had spread to her other breast. They tried every treatment, consulting eminent doctors in London and New York, undergoing ultra-strong doses of chemotherapy as well as a bone marrow transplant. They flew to Arizona to try alternative therapy. But they were told that her liver was enlarged, indicating the cancer had spread.

In April 1998 they flew to Tucson, in the US state of Arizona, where they had a desert hideaway. Linda's liver began to fail. On April 15, Paul and Linda went for a horseback ride. When the sun rose on the 16th, Linda was too unwell to get up, and she spent the day in bed. She slipped into a coma. Her children came in and told her they loved her. That night, around 3am, she became restless. Paul got into bed with Linda and told her she was on her horse, riding through the Sussex woods; "the bluebells are all out, and the sky is clear blue." By the time he'd finished the story his wife was dead.

Linda kept Paul away from temptation, though he showed no signs of straying. **"I never saw Paul with another woman," said one Wings member.**

Big Mistake

In May 1999, Paul McCartney attended a London awards show to recognize people "who had made a difference." It was a coup for the *Daily Mirror,* the newspaper sponsoring the event, to lure the ex-Beatle out of mourning. Little had been seen of McCartney during the 13 months since his wife had died.

Towards the end of the ceremony a good-looking woman of 31, wearing an eye-catching, red translucent top, strode on the stage. She had a wide, inviting smile, and gave a flirtatious toss of her thick blonde hair. She introduced a student who had shown fortitude in coping with a loss of limb due to septicemia.

Although it was not immediately obvious, the woman with the red top was herself an amputee, wearing a

prosthetic leg. A slight stiffness in her walk was the only sign of her disability.

"Who's that?" Paul asked Piers Morgan, editor of the *Mirror* (and now a talk-show host on CNN).

"Heather Mills," replied the journalist, briefing him on someone who was a minor celebrity in the tabloid world: the plucky model who'd lost a leg in a road accident and now raised money for charity.

Heather Mills travelled to Cambodia after the show. When she returned home she had a telephone message: "It's Paul McCartney here. I'd like to talk to you about the charity." Paul then invited Heather to his office and gave her £150,000.

Like Paul McCartney, Heather Mills had been raised in the working-class north of England. She was born in 1968 and suffered a troubled family life. Caught shoplifting when she was ten, she ran away at 14 and slept rough under railway arches, eventually straying into the fringes of the sex industry.

She met her first husband in a Soho bar. In 1990 she went to Yugoslavia for a ski vacation, where she had an affair with a ski instructor and found herself in the middle of the civil war. She developed an interest in people who'd lost limbs in landmine explosions. She travelled back to London to raise money for her cause, and to divorce her husband. One night, she met a rich bond dealer in a nightclub, and later, while they were crossing Kensington Road a motorcycle collided with Heather, tearing off her left foot. Surgeons amputated her leg below the knee.

The press was eager to tell the story of the plucky model turned amputee, and Heather auctioned off her story from her hospital bed. She started appearing in the tabloids and on daytime television. Soon she was doing bits of broadcasting and writing her autobiography, talking to journalists about her charity work and her love life.

Then Heather began to date the most famous living Englishman. That summer of 1999 she accompanied Paul to America, where he owned a house in The Hamptons, a popular seaside resort on Long Island, New York. After they returned to England, they were inseparable. They produced a record in which Heather talked about limbless people, while Paul played guitar in the background.

For Halloween, Paul arranged a tryst with Heather in a London hotel, filling their suite with Halloween lanterns. A few days later they threw a bonfire party at Paul's home.

Rejuvenated by his relationship with Heather, Paul picked up the reins of his career, which he had dropped when his wife died. Just as Linda Eastman had saved him as he suffered when the Beatles broke up, Heather Mills now pulled him out of his grief.

She was a gutsy woman. McCartney had been famous his whole adult life, enjoying a situation where almost everybody venerated him. Most people couldn't behave normally around the ex-Beatle. But Heather, like Linda before her, was a match for her

Paul and Heather Mills in 2000, two years before they wed. The marriage ran into problems.

© GETTY IMAGES

dominant, wilful partner.

At least one of Paul's friends felt that Heather was taking advantage of Paul's vulnerability after Linda died. After all, there were similarities between Heather and Linda—both blonde, big-breasted women who had been around some. Others struggled to see what he saw in Heather, a self-publicizing minor celebrity with a dubious past. But even after nude magazine photos surfaced, and stories came out saying that Heather had been a "party girl" who was rewarded with gifts and cash for keeping rich Arabs company, Paul supported his new girlfriend. And on June 11, 2002, they were married.

But the marriage soon ran into problems. Paul expected Heather to stay home and play the role of a traditional housewife/mother, as Linda had done when they were married. But Heather wearied of Paul's request that she cook every night. And Heather didn't like her charity work being overshadowed by Paul's music career. In fact, she seemed to find her husband generally annoying. "This is a man who has had his own way his entire life," she told interviewer Barbara Walters. "When you become famous at 19, it is sometimes hard to listen to other people's opinions."

As more stories came out about Heather's past—that she'd stolen from an employer and stood accused in the press of having worked as a prostitute—Paul's friends turned against her even more. One of Paul's colleagues claimed that Heather's only ambition was "to meet a wealthy man who would be able to give her a good lifestyle and a little bit of prestige and status."

Meanwhile, Paul used his contacts to help Heather raise money and make TV appearances. He also gave her two separate cash gifts of £250,000 and bought her a beach house on Britain's south coast. But Heather always wanted more. She asked Paul's accountant to pay a £480,000 mortgage on one of her properties. The accountant didn't pay, for the simple reason there was no mortgage—a situation later characterized in court

Nancy Shevell and Paul on 9th October 2011, after their wedding in London.

as verging on the fraudulent.

In May 2006, the couple separated. In March 2008, after an acrimonious legal battle, the British court issued a divorce decree. The court granted Heather a settlement of £24.3 million—far less than what she'd asked for, but still making her a wealthy woman.

All He Wants Is Love

In 2007, a few months after he'd separated from Heather Mills, Paul was seen with a new girlfriend, the dark, pencil-thin Nancy Shevell, heir to a US trucking fortune. Like Heather, she is substantially younger than Paul. But in other ways she is much more like Linda Eastman: a Jewish-American daughter of a wealthy self-made man, educated in Arizona, with a home in New York and a child from a previous relationship.

The couple was first photographed together on a beach in The Hamptons. They spent the spring of 2008 on holiday together, and later that year drove cross-country from Long Island to Los Angeles, a road trip Paul had always wanted to make. Along the way they found themselves bumping into everyday folks at petrol stations and restaurants—the couple, happy together, happy to pose for pictures.

Today, at age 69, Paul McCartney is still making music and playing concerts. His latest tour, "On the Run," a series of 19 concerts between July and December 2011 in the US, Europe and the Middle East, was sold out within days of being announced.

And on October 9, 2011, on the late John Lennon's 71st birthday, Paul McCartney made Nancy Shevell his third wife. A number of celebrities attended the festivities, including Ringo Starr, the only other surviving Beatle. The ceremony took place at Old Marylebone Town Hall in London, the same venue where McCartney married Linda Eastman over 40 years ago.

Small ad in a Scottish newspaper: "Sage-green toilet and sink. Can be seen in use. £100."

Eating salmon may help you fight that frazzled feeling.

Nature's Best Stress Soothers

Four tasty tension tamers can help boost your mood and protect your body

FROM **WebMD,** ***More, Redbook***

(FISH) JOFF LEE/STOCKFOOD/GETTY IMAGES; (CHOCOLATE) DORLING KINDERSLEY/GETTY IMAGES

FISH

To keep stress in check, add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet. These essential fats may help moderate stress hormones and protect you against depression. You could pop a fish oil supplement, but the most delicious way to get them is through food. For a steady supply of feel-good omega-3s, aim to eat 85 grams of fatty fish at least twice a week or a handful of walnuts every day.

DARK CHOCOLATE

Researchers find stress-relieving properties of dark chocolate that go beyond the taste buds. In a large German study, those who ate the most dark chocolate over ten years had lower blood pressure than those who ate the least.

Another study showed a reduction in a stress

hormone in people who ate dark chocolate often. Alas, dark chocolate still has "not-so-good-for-you fat, sugar, and calories," dietitian Kathleen M. Zelman reminds us, so stick to a few small squares a day.

BLACK TEA

Research from London suggests that drinking black tea may help you recover from nerve-racking events more quickly. Study participants who drank four cups of black tea every day for six weeks had lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and reported feeling more relaxed after stressful tasks than those who didn't drink the tea. Other studies have touted black tea's mood-boosting effects and suggested it can help increase alertness throughout the day.

AVOCADOS

The flesh of these delicious green fruits is loaded with two powerful stress fighters: potassium and monounsaturated fatty acids. Both nutrients can lower blood pressure, and monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) may play a part in helping ward off depression. In a large 11-year study, the more MUFAs Spanish participants ate, the less likely they were to be depressed. Researchers think the fats may improve how the brain absorbs the mood-boosting neurotransmitter serotonin.

More Ways to Create Calm

Eat crunchy foods. Munching celery, carrot sticks, and other crunchy foods can help relax a clenched jaw and ward off tension.

Drink milk. Calcium may help ease anxiety and mood swings linked to pre-menstrual syndrome.

(AVOCADO) JOFF LEE/STOCKFOOD/GETTY IMAGES; (CARROTS) GETTY IMAGES

Stand Tall, Kill Pain

Posture isn't just about how you look. It also has a powerful effect on how you feel—and on what you do. Want to eat less? Stick to your budget? Ease your back pain? Researchers in the growing field of "embodied cognition" suggest you assume these positions:

To lose weight, make a muscle. You really want to exercise and eat sensibly—but your resolve keeps going wobbly? Try clenching your hand, gritting your teeth, or standing on tiptoe. Flexing your muscles can make your willpower stronger, according to a study published last year. "You're telling yourself, 'I am strong. I can resist this temptation'," says Aparna Labroo, PhD, who studies decision making at the Rotman School of Management in Toronto, Canada. "The cumulative effect can be quite large over time."

To boost confidence, take more space, new studies suggest.

To hurt less, stand tall. Your back is killing you, so you curl up into a ball. But a study published last year found that an expansive posture—for instance, standing up straight, shoulders back, chest out—makes people less sensitive to pain. A dominant posture may help you breathe more deeply and can even affect hormone levels, says researcher Scott Wiltermuth, PhD, at the USC Marshall School of Business, USA. "But we think it's mostly about changes inside the head. You feel more powerful, and that increases your tolerance for pain." *Karen Ravn*

THE HIDDEN MESSAGE OF GUM DISEASE

If your dentist says you have periodontal disease, you may have an even more serious problem: diabetes. In a recent study of 2923 adults from New York University's Colleges of Dentistry and Nursing, 93 percent of those who had periodontitis were at high risk for diabetes, compared with just 63 percent of those without it. The culprit may be inflammation, says lead researcher Shiela M. Strauss, PhD. If you're diagnosed with gum disease, get a blood sugar test. Diabetes is often symptomless, but the earlier it's discovered, the easier it is to prevent long-term complications.

DOUGAL WATERS/GETTY IMAGES

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13 Things Your Marriage Counsellor Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1) I love couples who fight in the waiting room. At least they still care about each other. If one or both of you seem indifferent, my job is a lot harder.

2) When you say your feelings "just aren't there anymore," I know you're probably cheating.

3) Sometimes I'll tell a couple "no sex until the next session. Don't touch each other, period." What I'm really hoping is that they'll fail and feel a sense of unity from their mutual rebellion.

4) It may make you feel better to talk about your marriage issues with a good friend, but it will just make things worse. Never talk to outsiders about things in your marriage that you haven't already talked about with your spouse.

5) I'm not going to tell a couple that I have no idea why they're together. But take the hint if I say something like "You both have to make a decision about whether this is going to work long term."

6) What do I wish I could say? "Grow up!" "Stop whining!" "Get a life!" When I feel this way, I know I need a vacation.

7) Don't try to convince me you're the good one. In most marriages, there isn't a good one.

8) Yes, you should go to bed angry. If you try to resolve everything before you hit the sack, you'll both be sleep-

ILLUSTRATED BY EDDIE GUY

deprived and cranky the next day. Instead, get a good night's sleep and talk once you're rested.

9) Three signs that a couple is not going to succeed: name-calling, finger-pointing, and when one or both partners fail to accept even the tiniest bit of responsibility for the situation.

10) Sometimes two people love each other but have such different styles of living that I recommend they live together in separate bedrooms. Strange, but it works for some.

11) I've seen couples I thought didn't stand a chance end up staying together. Often it's because they're both willing to try. But sometimes it's just that they are too dysfunctional to leave each other.

12) The big thing most women don't understand: Men are not mind readers. If you don't tell him how you feel, he's not going to know. The big thing most men don't understand: If you hardly acknowledge your wife all day, she's not going to want to get intimate with you at night.

13) If I ask you how long you've had problems and you say "ten years," you're not going to change things in ten minutes or ten sessions.

Sources: (All in the USA) Jeff Palitz, marriage and family therapist; Susan Fletcher, PhD, a psychologist; Tina B. Tessina, PhD, a psychotherapist; Nancy Mramor, PhD; Karen Sherman, PhD; Lawrence J. Levy, PsyD, a licensed psychologist; Meghan L. Reitz, LCPC, NCC; and a marriage counsellor.

For more things your marriage counselor won't tell you, go to readers digest.com/marriagetips

Parenting Without Your Parents

Allison Gilbert lost her mother before she was married; her father died when her first child was a toddler. "That has been a very big parenting challenge for me," she says. Simple questions like "When did I learn to talk?" went unanswered, says Gilbert. With women having children later, Gilbert's situation is increasingly common. For her new book, *Parentless Parents*, she interviewed family and mental health experts, as well as more than 1300 "adult orphans." Here's what she learned:

- Keep your parents' legacies alive—even if Mom and Dad are long gone. Old scrapbooks and photo albums are treasure troves, but that's just a beginning. "I've taken my kids, now ten and eight, to the neighbourhoods where my parents grew up and introduced them to my parents' friends and colleagues," Gilbert says. "I believe they know their grandparents, even though they're not here."

- The teen years can be tough. You'll miss the "safe haven" that grandparents can provide in times of conflict, Gilbert says. Meanwhile, you'd be comforted to see some of your parents' traits emerge in your kids. "You get the feeling that your parents aren't gone."

- Make time with grandparents—you'll never regret it. "Carpe diem!" Gilbert says. "When my in-laws take my children someplace, I know my kids are going to remember that more than any trinket they could buy."

Dawn Raffel

Getting Bumped

You have your ticket, but you've been denied boarding. Yes, you've been bumped. Overbooking by airlines is commonplace. If your travel plans are flexible, getting bumped can earn you a few extra bucks or a voucher for a future flight. But if you need to be somewhere urgently, it can be a disaster.

What happens if I get bumped?

> Sit back and relax. You'll usually be seated on the next available flight.

> Remain in the check-in area and don't try to make your own arrangements—airline personnel will do that for you.

To avoid getting bumped:

> Arrive at the airport ahead of time. Passengers who are late in arriving run a much greater risk of getting bumped.

> Check in online before you head to the airport.

If you would *like* to get bumped:

> Book flights departing on weekends or during holiday periods.

> Arrive at the airport early and tell the agent you'd like to fly standby. Be friendly and polite: Compensation offered to flyers is often at the airline's discretion.

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SMALL-PET TRAVEL TIPS

A trip with small animals requires careful monitoring to make sure pets don't get sick or become stressed. With proper planning and caring, however, you can have a fun getaway with your rabbit, pug or other pocket-sized companion. So before attempting long-distance travel, consult your pet's vet, and consider the following tips:

> Find a good small-animal carrier. Carriers with front and top openings can make it easier for you to get your pet inside.

> Use a seat belt to secure the carrier inside your vehicle.

> For a long trip , do practice runs before hitting the road.

> Keep your pet out of the sun. As with kids, never leave any pet inside a closed vehicle in any weather.

> Cut the risk of letting your beloved pet escape: Don't forget to secure the carrier so that it stays closed—and your furry friend stays safe.

> Pack extra food and treats.

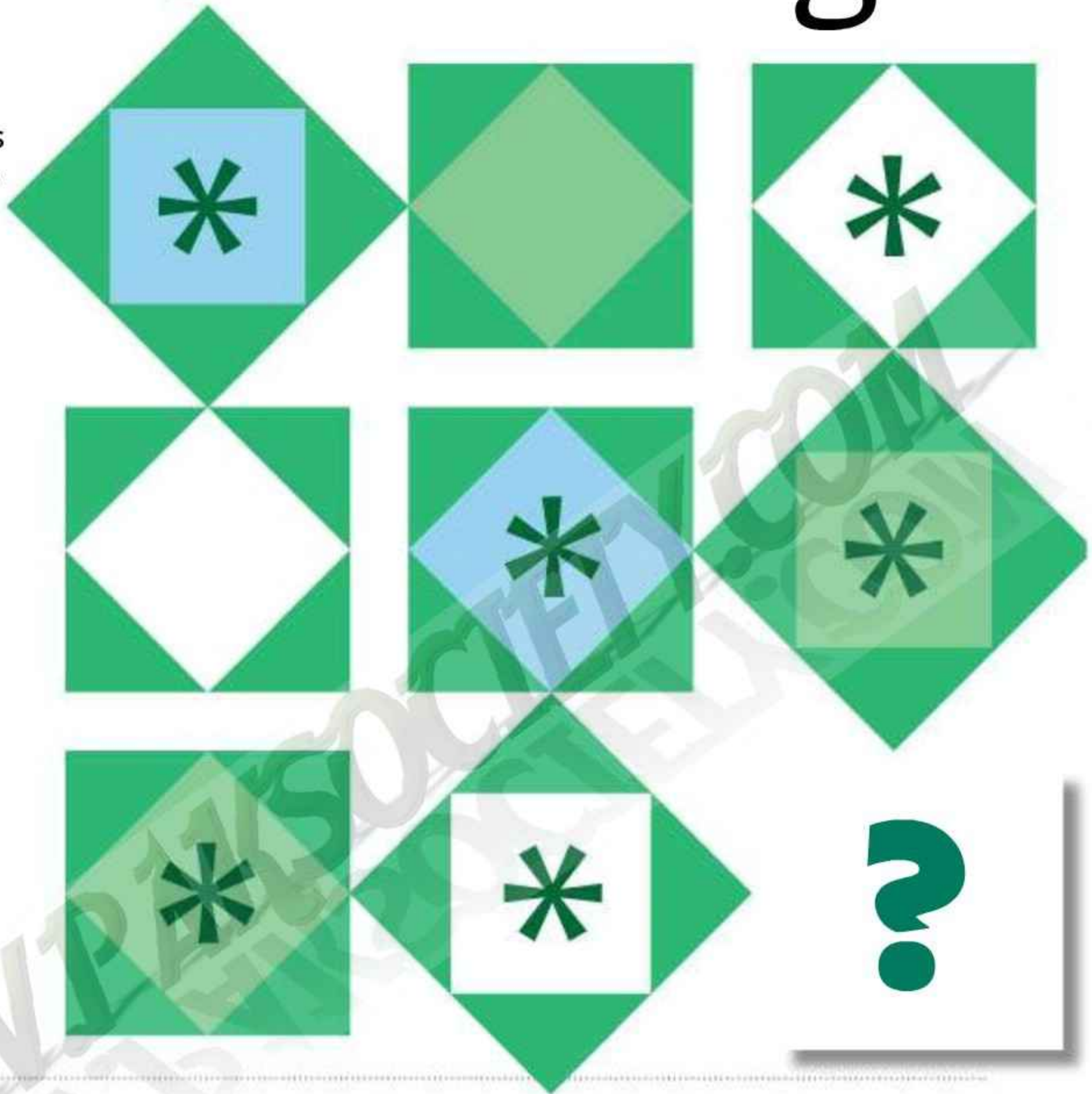
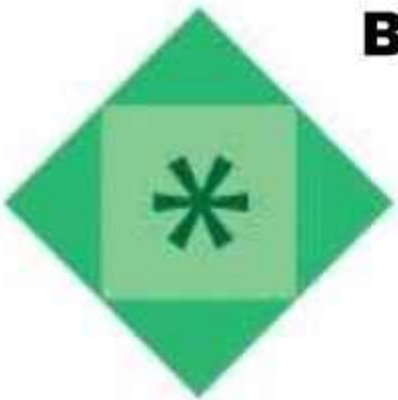
> Bring cleaning supplies and paper towels.

> Make sure the lodging you choose to stay at also welcomes small pets.

Marilyn Soltis, WebVet.com

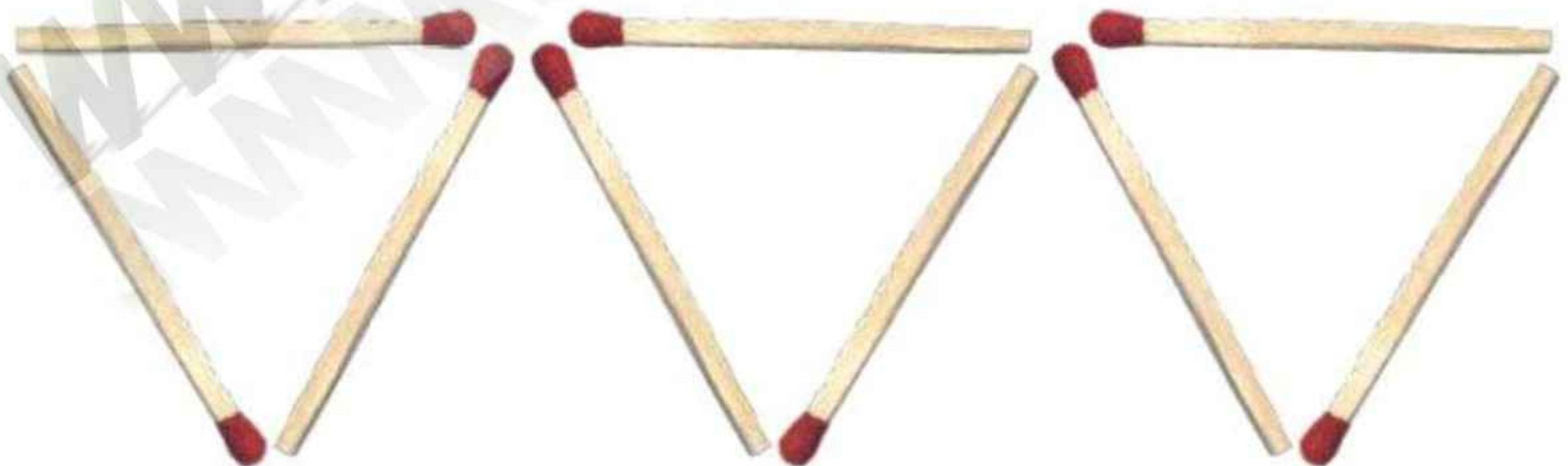
¡Challenge!

Square off

Which of the tiles below completes the sequence?

A

B

C

D

?

Three to five

Nine matchsticks are arranged to form the three triangles above. Move just three of the matchsticks to create five triangles.

Solutions on page 152.